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THE DOCTRINES OF GOD's Everlasting Love TO HIS ELECT, AND THEIR Eternal Union with CHRIST:

TOGETHER

With some other TRUTHS, Stated and Defended.

In a LETTER to Dr ABRAHAM TAYLOR.

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SIR,

HAVING had the happineſs of hearing, and ſince of reading, your two Diſcourſes, *Of the Inſufficiency of Natural Religion*; I cannot but expreſs a ſatisfaction with your method of treating the argument; nor would you have heard from me in this public manner, had you not, in your performance, fallen foul on ſome of your friends, whilſt you was engaging with the common adverſary.

When I heard your firſt Diſcourſe on this ſubject, I obſerved a paragraph which gave me ſome uneaſineſs. I determined to take notice of it to you, as I had opportunity; and knowing I ſhould be preſent when you condeſcended to ſubmit your Diſcourſes to the correction of ſome friends, I purpoſed humbly to offer ſome reaſons for either dropping, or altering the paragraph; but, to my great ſatisfaction, I found myſelf under no neceſſity of doing it. The paſſage I refer to being omitted in reading, I concluded from hence, that upon a reviſal of your diſcourſes, you had ſeen reaſon in your own mind to ſtrike it out: But, ſince reading your ſermons, now made public, I find it ſtands, and, if I miſtake

not, with ſome additional keenneſs and ſeverity: Your reaſon for this you beſt know. Your words are theſe (*a*):

"It has been ſaid, that during the times of our "civil commotions, there was little preached up but "faith in Chriſt, and that the duties of morality "were little inſiſted on: It is certain that ſome ig- "norant Enthuſiaſtic preachers inſiſted then much "on eternal union with Chriſt, and that ſin could "do a believer no harm; but all wiſe and thought- "ful men abhorred ſuch immoral conceits."

What I have to complain of in this paſſage, is as follows.

I. The lameneſs and impertinence of it. You obſerve, "It has been ſaid, that during the times "of our civil commotions, there was little preached "up but faith in Chriſt, and that the duties of mo- "rality were little inſiſted on." One would have expected that you would have given an anſwer to this charge, and it looks as if you had deſigned it, by your making mention of it, but you neither grant nor deny it; and, inſtead of doing either, as you ought to have done, you put off the objection, by ſaying, "that ſome ignorant Enthuſiaſtic preachers "inſiſted then much on eternal union with Chriſt, "and that ſin could do a believer no harm." Things which are not in the charge, and no way to your purpoſe to make mention of. Without taking upon me to be a Dictator to you, you might have with truth

(*a*) A Defence of ſome important Doctrines of the Goſpel, by ſeveral Miniſters, Vol. I. p. 48.

truth allowed, that during thoſe times, faith in Chriſt was very much preached up, though not to the excluſion of moral duties; and, with a great deal of juſtneſs, you might have obſerved, that the power of godlineſs very much prevailed; that the duties of religion were much practiſed; that the Lord's day was ſtrictly and religiouſly obſerved; that ſocial worſhip was attended on conſtantly; that family and cloſet-devotion were kept up with much ſtrictneſs; and that morality, in all its branches, was in a very flouriſhing condition in thoſe times, when faith in Chriſt was ſo much inſiſted on. This, I am very ſenſible, you were capable of obſerving; but you choſe rather to fling at the doctrine of eternal union with Chriſt, and to introduce that in an aukward way, and by joining it with a diſagreeable notion of ſin's doing a believer no harm, to draw an odium upon ſome good men in thoſe times, whom you call "ignorant enthuſiaſtic preachers," and through them to ſtrike at ſome who are now in being.

II. It does not appear to be matter of fact, that in thoſe times eternal union with Chriſt, and that ſin could do a believer no harm, were much inſiſted on, as you ſay. I know not, indeed, what acquaintance you may have with the pulpit performances of thoſe times; for my own part, I can only judge of their preaching by what they have printed; and, I preſume, that if theſe doctrines are any where to be met with, they are to be found in the writings of ſuch, who, in thoſe times, were

branded for *Antinomians*; ſuch as *Eaton*, *Saltmarſh*, *Simpſon*, *Town*, *Richardſon* and *Criſp*; whoſe writings I have carefully peruſed, and find no reaſon to conclude that thoſe doctrines were *much* inſiſted on, as you ſay. By reading the works of theſe authors, I have been confirmed in the truth of an obſervation made ſome years ago, by the learned *Hoornbeck* (*b*): "For I perceive, ſays he, while "heads of doctrine are made up by the adverſaries, "rather than the authors themſelves, out of their "diſſertations, books, and ſermons, that ſometimes "their ſenſe is not ſufficiently taken, nor happily "expreſſed; and that both here and there a great "deal, indeed, is ſaid, but not much to the pur-"poſe; and that they either do not underſtand, or "miſtake the thing in diſpute." As to the doctrine of eternal union with Chriſt, however conſiſtent it may be with ſome principles of theirs, I do not perceive that they take any notice of it; and ſome of them ſeem to have no notion of it, but tread in the common beaten path of union by the Spirit of Chriſt, and faith in Chriſt.

Eaton, in his *Honey-Comb of free Juſtification* (*c*), has theſe words: "Chriſt will have no foul leprous "members united and made one with him; and "therefore

(*b*) Namque video, dum ex integris ipſorum diſſertationibus, libellis & concionibus theſes conficiuntur per ſcriptores adverſarios magis quam per auctores ipſos, nonnunquam haud ſatis feliciter illorum ſenſus capi & exprimi, & tum hinc tum inde multe quidem dici, at non multum, & vel non intelligi vel non peti τὸ κρινόμενον. Hoornbeck. Summ. Controv. L. x. de Browniſtis, p. 701, 702.

(*c*) Chap. 15. p. 437, 438.

" therefore he firſt waſheth us in his own blood, and " makes us clean from all our ſins, and then knits " and unites us as fit members into his ownſelf. " The order alſo and natural dependence of theſe " benefits (that is, juſtification and union) upon " one another, confirm the ſame; for we cannot be " knit into Chriſt before we have the Holy Ghoſt " dwelling in us: The Holy Ghoſt comes not to " dwell in us before we be reconciled to God; and " we are not reconciled to God before we have all " our ſins aboliſhed out of God's ſight; but when " all our ſins are aboliſhed, and we made perfectly " holy and righteous, from all ſpot of ſin in the " ſight of God freely, then the Holy Ghoſt comes " and dwells in us, and knits and unites us, as fit " members, into the bleſſed body of Jeſus Chriſt; " then we are, by the wedding garment alone of " Chriſt's righteouſneſs, made, above our ſenſe and " feeling, fit brides for ſo glorious a Bridegroom." And in another place, (*d*) he has theſe words: " This union and conjunction then is the cauſe that " I am ſeparated from myſelf, and tranſlated into " Chriſt and his kingdom, which is a kingdom of " grace, righteouſneſs, peace, joy, life, ſalvation " and glory; yea, by this inſeparable union and " conjunction, which is through faith, Chriſt and " I are made, as it were, one body in ſpirit."

Simpſon, another of thoſe men who were called *Antinomians* in theſe times, expreſſes himſelf on the ſubject of union after this manner, when he is

(*d*) Page 443.

ſpeaking (*e*) of the uſe of faith in juſtification: "So "that by faith, ſays he, though we are aſſured of "God's love in the firſt place, yet we are not only "aſſured, but likewiſe Chriſt is applied unto us; we "are united unto him, and do enjoy all things in "him, and receive all good things from him." And in another place (*f*); "A believing man is bone of "the bone, and fleſh of the fleſh, and one ſpirit with "the Lord Jeſus: There is a cloſe and near union "and application of Chriſt to the ſoul by faith."

Saltmarſh ſays nothing in what I have ſeen of his, concerning eternal union; and what he ſays of union itſelf, is not very intelligible; yet it ſeems as though he had no other notion of being in Chriſt, or of being united to Chriſt, but by faith. He obſerves (*g*): "That the pure ſpiritual and myſtical "fountain of the mortification of ſin, is the being "planted together in the likeneſs of Chriſt's death, "our old man being crucified with him, *Rom.* vi. 6. "Our union with Chriſt, our Head, our Righte-"ouſneſs, our Vine" And, a little after, he has "theſe words: "Now that power wherein we are "perfectly mortified, is our union with Chriſt, our "being planted in the fellowſhip of his death, *&c.* "and that wherein we are imperfectly, or in part "mortified, is in that transformed nature, or ſpiri-"tual nature, the body of ſin being in a believer, "more or leſs, till he lay down this body and take it

(*e*) Sermon III. on Eph. ii. 8, 9. p. 116. (*f*) Ibid. p. 129.
(*g*) Free Grace, or the Flowings of Chriſt's Blood freely to Sinners, p. 66, 67.

" it up a more glorious one; ſo as a believer is to " conſider himſelf dead to ſin, only in the fellow- " ſhip of Chriſt's death myſtically, and to conſider " himſelf only dying to ſin in his own nature ſpiri- " tually: So as in Chriſt he is only compleat, and " in himſelf imperfect at the beſt." " We are com- " pleat in him," ſaith the apoſtle, *Col.* ii. 10. yet " there is ſuch a power and efficacy, and mighty " working in this myſtical union and fellowſhip with " Chriſt, that he ſhall find ſin dying in him from " this, the Spirit working moſt in the virtue of " this." And, in another place (*b*), he ſays; " A " believer hath a twofold condition, in Chriſt, in " himſelf; yet he ought ever to conſider himſelf in " Chriſt by faith, not in himſelf." And elſewhere he obſerves (*i*): " The word ſays, that we are com- " pleat in Chriſt, and righteous in Chriſt; but when " I repent, or love, or obey, I believe, I am in " Chriſt; and therefore my love, and repentance, " and obedience, is ſuch as I may believe, though " not in themſelves, yet in him to be good and ſpi- " ritual."

Town, another writer of thoſe times, who was much charged with *Antinomianiſm*, ſays nothing of eternal union, but has many expreſſions in his writings, which ſhew that he had no other notion of union,

(*b*) Free Grace, or the Flowings of Chriſt's Blood freely to Sinners, p. 141.

(*i*) Ib. p. 156, 157. I have ſeen two other pieces of *Saltmarſh*'s; one is called, *Shadows flying away*, being a Reply to *Gataker*; the other, *The Smoke in the Temple*, and chiefly reſpects church government; nor is there any thing in either of them concerning union with Chriſt.

union, but by the Spirit of God, and by the grace of faith. In one of his books he has theſe words (*k*): "The righteouſneſs of faith unites them, that is, "the ſaints, to Chriſt their Lord, Head and Gover- "nor, that ſo henceforth they may be led by his "free Spirit and ſwayed by the ſcepter of his king- "dom:" And, in the ſame treatiſe, he aſks (*l*), "Where doth the law ſpeak a ſyllable of our con- "junction and union with Chriſt through faith, "whereby Chriſt and the believer become one body "in Spirit?" And in another place (*m*); "By faith "we being united and married to Chriſt, do by him "bring forth fruits to God, even perfect obedience "imputatively, and inchoative holineſs through the "operation of his Spirit, received by the miniſtry "and doctrine of faith, and not of the law." Though, in another paſſage (*n*) in the ſame book, he makes the ordinance of water baptiſm to be the ſaints union with, and inſition into Chriſt. His words are theſe: "That ordinance, ſpeaking of "baptiſm, is a true, ſpiritual, and real ingrafting of "them into Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* xii. 13. ſo that faith is "but the revelation of what was ſecret and hid be- "fore, or an evident teſtimony, and lively and com- "fortable apprehenſion and application in the con- "ſcience of the perſon of what was conferred and "made his before;" that is, if I underſtand him, in baptiſm. In another of his books (*o*), he has theſe expreſſions: "Let the poor ſinful, miſerable, "and loſt ſoul, firſt be united and married to him, "in

(*k*) The Aſſertion of Grace, p. 4. (*l*) P. 74. (*m*) P. 118.
(*n*) Page 11, 12. (*o*) The Re-aſſertion of Grace, p. 12.

" in whom dwelleth the fulneſs of the Godhead, and " in whom ſhe is then compleat, wanting nothing, " *Col.* ii. 9, 10. then tell of duties. Again (*p*), " If " you do truly good works, you do them in Chriſt, " abiding in him, *John* xv. 4. in whom you are " alive, and walk continually by faith.—Now the " ſoul cannot walk in Chriſt, nor have union with " him, ſave by faith." Once more (*q*), " Can man's " nature be changed, ſays he, till he be united and " ingrafted into Chriſt, the true Vine? And doth " not virtue come by that inſition and union?" And, in ſome pages after (*r*), " It is by the Spirit that the " Soul cometh to union with Chriſt." And, in another of his treatiſes (*s*), he has theſe words: " Faith cometh by hearing, and after faith comes " actual union."

The only writers, in the times referred to, that I have met with, who aſſert even union before faith, are *Richardſon* (*t*) and *Criſp* (*u*), who yet ſpeak not a word of eternal union; neither do they, or the writers above-mentioned, profeſſedly treat of the doctrine of union in any ſenſe, but only take notice of it as it falls in their way. I read their books with a greedy expectation of frequently meeting with the doctrine of eternal union, in hopes of finding arguments for the confirmation of it, and of receiving more light into it, which I believe to be an eternal truth.

(*p*) The Re-aſſertion of Grace, p. 20. (*q*) Page 105. (*r*) Page 126. (*s*) *Monomachia*; or, a ſingle reply to Mr Rutherford, &c. p. 37. (*t*) Anſwer to Dr Homes, p. 111, 112. (*u*) Chriſt alone exalted, Vol. I. Serm. VII. p. 104. Vol. III. Serm. VII. p. 597, 599, 600. Serm. VIII. p. 609, 614, 615, 616, 617. Ed. 4to.

truth. Eternal union was ſo far from being a ſubject *much* inſiſted on in theſe times, as you ſay, that I do not find it was inſiſted on *at all*.

As to the notion of ſin's doing a believer no harm, *Eaton*, *Saltmarſh*, *Simpſon*, and *Town*, ſay nothing of it; nor have they any thing like it, that I have met with, in their writings; and I could eaſily fill up whole pages with paſſages out of them, in which they expreſs their abhorrence and deteſtation of ſin, and their great regard to a holy life and converſation.

Richardſon and *Criſp* are the only writers, in thoſe times, that I have obſerved to make uſe of any expreſſions of this kind. As for *Richardſon*, he has but one ſingle paſſage which looks any thing like this notion, that ſin does a believer no harm; which is this (*w*): "If *all things work together for our good*, "then, ſays he, all falls, pains, diſeaſes, croſſes, "afflictions, *&c.* do us no hurt, but work for our "good; *all things work for our good*, Rom. viii. 28." And yet this is no more than what many ſound divines have ſaid, who never were charged with *Antinomianiſm*; when they aſſert, that all things, even the ſins of God's people, are over-ruled by a kind and good Providence for their good, as their afflictions and croſſes are; and by falls into ſin doing *no hurt*, he means the hurt of puniſhment, as is evident from the whole of his reaſoning and argument in that place. He clearly hints, in many places, at the hurt that comes by ſin, with reſpect to a believer's peace and comfort, the damage it does to others, and the diſhonour it brings to God: "Be

(*w*) Juſtification by Chriſt alone, p. 21.

" Be afraid to ſin, ſays he (*x*), and uſe means to " prevent it; conſider God hath forbidden it, *Rom.* " vi. Conſider ſin in the nature of it, in the root " and fruit of it: It is the price of blood; there is " no true ſweetneſs in ſin, no contentment, no ſatis- " faction in it, why you ſhould deſire it; it fills the " ſoul with wounds, ſorrow, bitterneſs, ſhame; let " experience ſpeak." And, in another place (*y*), he ſays: " We ſhould be afraid to ſin, becauſe it is " forbidden by God. 2. It is diſhonourable to him, " his truth and ſervants. 3. It incourageth others " to ſin. 4. It will fill our ſouls with ſorrow to " ſin againſt ſo loving a Father, and to diſhonour " him, *&c.* Having ſinned, if but in the leaſt " meaſure, we ſhould be ſo far from covering it " with any pretence or excuſe, that we ſhould abhor " it, and ourſelves for it, with the greateſt deteſta- " tion?" And elſewhere (*z*) he ſays: " Be ſure ye " allow yourſelf in no ſin, but in the ſtrength of " God hate and abhor, with the greateſt indigna- " tion, all ſin, and the appearance of it; it is better " to die than to ſin. Here is that which accom- " panieth ſin, which ſtrikes at a believer's peace " and comfort; it will damp, ſtraiten, and oppreſs " the ſoul; it will hinder their comfort, joy, and " peace in God, unleſs God doth wonderfully " ſtrengthen their faith in him; we find by ex- " perience, that ſin is a lett to our faith and com- " fort, it having often unſettled and diſquieted us " in our peace and comfort, though we ought not " to be ſo."

Criſp

(*x*) Counſels, p. 98. (*y*) Ib. p. 150, 151.
(*z*) Divine Conſolations, p. 245.

Criſp is the only writer that expreſſes himſelf freely and largely on this ſubject, and with the leaſt guard (*a*); and yet when he ſays, that "believers "need not be afraid of their ſins," his meaning is not, that they need not be afraid to commit ſin, but that they need not be afraid of ſins committed, as *Hoornbeck* (*b*), *Witſius* (*c*), and *Chauncey* (*d*), have juſtly obſerved; and when he ſays, that "the ſins "of believers can do them *no hurt*;" by *hurt* he means, the hurt of puniſhment, penal evil, or the penal effects of ſin, which believers are freed from, and therefore ſhall never enter into a ſtate of condemnation, Chriſt having bore their ſins, and made ſatisfaction to juſtice for them; but then he ſpeaks of ſin, in its own nature, as odious and dreadful to believers, and of bitterneſs and evil, as the certain fruits of it. The Doctor, I verily believe, uſed theſe expreſſions in a ſound ſenſe, and with a good deſign; not to encourage perſons in ſin, but to relieve and comfort the minds of believers, diſtreſſed with ſin; yet, I muſt confeſs, I do not like the expreſſions, but am of opinion they ought to be diſuſed.

And now ſurely, Sir, this ſingle author's uſing of this expreſſion, and that not in the groſs and vile ſenſe of it, cannot be ſufficient to bear you out, in ſaying, that ſin's doing a believer no harm, was much inſiſted on in thoſe times: I can hardly think

(*a*) Chriſt alone exalted, Vol. I. Serm. X. p. 157. Vol. III. Serm. I. p. 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514. Serm. II. p. 528, 529. Serm. III. p. 49, &c.

(*b*) Summ. Controverſ. L. X. de Browniſtis, p. 714.

(*c*) Animadverſ. Irenicae, &c. c. 12. §. 6. p. 148.

(*d*) Neonomianiſm unmaſk'd. Part III. Debate 17. p. 26.

think you have any reference to *Archer*'s book, called, *Comfort for Believers about their Sin and Troubles*; in which the author exhorts believers not to be oppreſſed (*e*) and perplexed for their ſins; though he acknowledges that godly ſorrow and true ſhame become them, and ſays, that till they have it, God will not own them. He aſſerts (*f*), in ſo many words, "that we may ſafely ſay, that God "is, and hath an hand in, and is the Author of "the ſinfulneſs of his People:" (*Horreſco referens!*) and what is enough to make one ſhudder at the reading of, he ſays (*g*), that "all the ſins which "believers are left to, they are through and becauſe "of the covenant of grace left to them; and the "covenant implies a diſpenſation of ſinning to "to them, as well as other things:" And adds, "By ſins are they as much nurtured and fitted for "heaven, as by any thing elſe." All which is blaſphemous, vile and abominable; and for which, if I miſtake not, the book was ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. I ſay, I can hardly think you can have reference to this author; for though he aſſerts this notion in the groſſeſt ſenſe, and in the vileſt manner, yet it unhappily falls out for you, that this man was not for eternal union, but for union by faith: He frequently obſerves (*b*), that faith immediately unites to Chriſt, and is the bond of union to him, and what brings the Holy Ghoſt into the ſoul. If you had this author and his book in your eye, you ſhould rather have ſaid, that "union

(*e*) Page 18, 19, 20. (*f*) Page 98. (*g*) Page 125.
(*b*) Page 34, 42, 49, 53, 69, 175.

" union by faith, and ſin's doing a believer no harm, " were much inſiſted on in thoſe times." But,

III. What I have further to complain of, is your joining the harmleſs doctrine of eternal union with that hurtful one, as it may be taken, of ſin's doing a believer no harm. You could have no other view, than to bring the doctrine of eternal union into diſgrace, and an odium upon the aſſerters of it, as if there was a ſtrict connexion between theſe two, and as if thoſe who eſpouſed the one, held the other. The notion of ſin's doing a believer no harm, was never a received tenet of any body or ſociety of Chriſtians among us; no, not even of thoſe who have been called *Antinomians*. It is not the ſentiment of thoſe who are branded with the name in this day. I am well informed, that ſome churches, who are deſpiſed as *Antinomian*, have caſt ſome out of their communion for holding this notion in the groſs ſenſe of it. I wiſh ſome churches, that reckon themſelves more orthodox, would ſhew a like zeal againſt *Arianiſm*, and in the behalf of Chriſt's proper Deity. There are, indeed, I hear, a ſcattered ſcandalous ſet of perſons in the *Fen Country*, the diſciples of one *David Culey*, who was cut off from a church in *Northamptonſhire*, and was infamous for his blaſphemy and ſcandalous life, who have imbibed this notion, and live anſwerably to it, but are diſregarded by all perſons of ſerioufneſs and ſobriety. It was not a general received notion of thoſe who were called *Antinomians*, a little before or during the time of our civil commotions. Dr *Criſp* is the only perſon that ſpeaks it out, and yet not in the

the groſs ſenſe of it, as has been obſerved. All that their adverſaries have ſaid of them, is not to be relied on; ſuch unworthy writers as *Edwards* and *Paget*, I give no credit to. Mr *Crandon* (*i*) ſpeaks of ſome *Antinomians* in *Somerſetſhire*, with whom he was acquainted, and he gives us a catalogue of their ſentiments; but nothing like this is taken notice of by him: Nay, it does not appear that the *Antinomians* in *Germany*, the followers of *Iſlebius Agricola*, from *Luther*'s account (*k*) of them, held any ſuch notion. *Sleidan* (*l*), in his *Commentaries*, takes notice of them, and of their tenets. His ſhort account of them is this: "This year, that is, 1538. ſprung "up the ſect of them who are called *Antinomians*; "they ſay, that repentance is not to be taught out "of the decalogue; and oppoſe thoſe who teach, "that the goſpel is not to be preached, but to thoſe "whoſe hearts are firſt ſhaken and broken by the "preaching of the law: They alſo aſſert, that "whatever a man's life may be, and how impure "ſoever, yet is he juſtified, if he only believes the "promiſes of the goſpel." This laſt aſſertion of theirs is ſomewhat ambiguous, and may ſeem to favour this notion, of ſin's doing a believer no harm, as this author has delivered it: if his meaning is,

 that

(*i*) Againſt Baxter, Part I. chap. 22. p. 264, 265, &c.

(*k*) Vid. Hoornbeck. Summ. Controv. l. 10. p. 690, 691.

(*l*) Hoc anno ſecta prodiit eorum qui dicuntur Antinomi; hi pœnitentiam ex decalogo non eſſe docendam dicunt; & illos impugnant, qui docent, non eſſe predicandum evangelium, niſi primum quaſſatis animis atque fractis per explicationem legis: ipſi vero ſtatuunt, quæcunque tandem ſit hominis vita & quantumvis impura, juſtificari tamen eum, ſi modo promiſſionibus evangelii credat. Sleidan. Commentar. l. 12. p. 337.

that they held that a man may be juſtified by faith in the goſpel-promiſe, without ſanctification; or, though he allows himſelf in a continued impurity of life, this is a contradiction to the grace of God; but if his meaning is, that they held that a man may be truly juſtified by faith in Chriſt, though his former life has been never ſo impure; this is a truth of the goſpel, and gives no countenance to this doctrine. Of all that I have met with, none more roundly aſſert it than *Eunomius*, and his followers, who lived in the fourth Century. "It is reported of this "man (*m*), that he was ſuch an enemy to good "manners, that he ſhould aſſert that the commiſſion "of any ſin whatever, and a continuance therein, "could not hurt any one, if he was but a partaker "of that faith which was taught by him." This man was a diſciple of *Aetius*, whoſe followers were called from him *Aetians*; of whom *Epiphanius* (*n*) writes, that they were unconcerned about holineſs of life, or any of the commands of God, and ſpoke very ſlightly of ſin. *Irenaeus* (*o*) has a paſſage concerning the *Valentinians*, which comes up to this notion;

(*m*) Fertur etiam uſque adeo fuiſſe bonis moribus inimicus ut aſſeveraret, quod nihil cuiquam obeſſet quorumlibet perpetratio, ac perſeverantia peccatorum, ſi hujus, quae ab illo docebatur, fidei particeps eſſet. Aug. de Haereſ. c. 54.

(*n*) Contr. Haereſ. l. 3. Haereſ. 76.

(*o*) Ως γαρ το χοικον αδυνατον σωτηριας μεταιχειν (ου γαρ ειναι, λεγουσιν, αυλοις διεκτικον αυτης) ουτως παλιν το πνευματικον, θελουσιν οι αυλοι ειναι, αδυναλον φθορας καταδιξασθαι, και οποιαις συγκαταγενωνλαι πραξεσιν· ου γαρ τροπον χρυσος ου βορβορω καταλιβεις εκ αποβαλλει την καλλοιην αυλε, αλλα την ιδιαν φυσιν διαφυλατει, τε βορβορε μηδεν αδικησαι τον χρυσον, ουτε δε κ᾽ αυλος λεγουσι, και ου οποιαις

notion; it is this: "As that which is earthly cannot "partake of ſalvation, for they ſay it is uncapable "of it; ſo again, that which is ſpiritual, by which "they mean themſelves, cannot receive corruption, "by whatſoever actions they may be concerned in. "Juſt as gold being put into dirt, does not loſe its "beauty, but retains its nature, nor can it receive "any hurt from the dirt; ſo they ſay, that they "may be concerned in ſome material actions, and "not be at all hurt, or loſe the ſpiritual ſubſtance: "Hence the moſt perfect of them do all thoſe things "which are forbidden, without any manner of fear." And then inſtances in eating things ſacrificed to idols, attending on the worſhip of the Heathens, frequenting the theatres, and indulging themſelves in all fleſhly luſts. The *Gnoſticks*, *Carpocratians*, *Saturninians*, *Baſilidians*, with many others, embraced ſuch-like impure notions; which, it is probable, they received from *Simon Magus*, the father of hereſies, who allowed (*p*) thoſe who believed in him and his *Helena*, to live as they liſt! Theſe things I take notice of, to ſhew by whom this tenet has and has not been received; and, to ſupport the juſtneſs of my complaint againſt you, in joining the doctrine of eternal union with it, when they never went together, as I can learn, or were ever received by the ſame perſons.

οικειαις υλικαις πραξεσι καταϛαινονται, μηδεν αυλης παραβλαπτεσθαι, μηδε αποβαλλειν την πνευματικην υποϛασιν· διο δε ϰ ϰα απειρημενα παντα αδεως οι τελειοτατοι πραττουσιν αυλων. Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. l. 1. c. 1. p. 26. Ed. Pariſ.

(*p*) Hi qui in eum & in Helenam ejus ſpem habeant & ut liberos agere quae velint. Irenaeus adv. Haereſ. l. 1. c. 20. p. 116.

IV. I obſerve that you call the doctrine of eternal union, as well as that of ſin's doing a believer no harm, an immoral conceit. I do not well know what you mean by an *immoral conceit*; every imagination of the thoughts of the heart being only evil, is an immoral conceit; all ſinful luſts in the mind are ſo: *When luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death* (q). An immoral conceit, properly ſpeaking, I apprehend, is the firſt motion, thought, and imagination of ſin riſing up in the mind; how this is applicable to the doctrine of eternal union, I ſee not: But, I ſuppoſe, your meaning is, that the doctrine of eternal union is a conceit and fiction of ſome mens brains, which has a tendency to promote immorality, and encourage perſons in it. That it is no conceit, which has its foundation only in the fancy and imagination of ſome men, but a truth contained in the ſacred ſcriptures, I hope to make appear. Was it a mere conceit, why you ſhould reckon it an immoral one, I know not; if it is a conceit, it is an harmleſs one; nor can it be reaſonably thought to have a tendency to promote immorality and profaneneſs, any more than the doctrine of eternal election has, by which the holineſs of God's people is infallibly ſecured unto them; for *God has choſen them in Chriſt, before the foundation of the world, that they ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love* (r). Now how perſons can be in Chriſt, choſen in him, and yet not

(q) James i. 15. (r) Eph. i. 4.

not united to him, or how there can be an eternal election of perſons in Chriſt, and yet no eternal union of them to him, is what I do not underſtand; and as eternal election ſecures the holineſs of the ſaints, ſo does eternal union. It is becauſe Chriſt has loved them with an everlaſting love, and by loving them, has united them to himſelf, and become the Head of them, and one with them; therefore he has given himſelf for them, *that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works* (*s*); and does alſo ſend down his Spirit into their Hearts, to renew and ſanctify them; to implant grace in them, to enable them to perform good works, in which he has before ordained that they ſhould walk, and to hold on in faith and holineſs to the end. Redemption from ſin, the ſanctification of our hearts, all the good works done in faith, and perſeverance in grace to the end, are the fruits and effects of eternal union to Chriſt. In what ſenſe then it is an immoral conceit, or how it tends to promote immorality, you would do well to tell us, or acknowledge that you have abuſed it.

V. You call the perſons who, you ſay, inſiſted much on eternal union, "ignorant, enthuſiaſtic "preachers." One would have thought you might have ſpared this ſevere reflection, for the ſake of ſome, who have aſſerted an eternal union, that are above your contempt, and very far from any juſt charge of ignorance and enthuſiaſm. Dr *Goodwin*

 ſpeaks

(*s*) Tit. ii. 14.

ſpeaks of an election-union, a virtual and repreſentative one, which the elect have in Chriſt before the foundation of the world (*t*): "As in the womb, "ſays he, head and members are not conceived "apart, but together, as having relation to each "other; ſo were we and Chriſt (as making up one "myſtical body unto God) formed together in the "eternal womb of election." Again (*u*), "Were "you ſo choſen in Chriſt, as that God never pur-"poſed you a being but as in Chriſt, and then gave "you this ſubſiſtence in Chriſt, never caſting a "thought upon you out of him; then reckon of no "other being, but what you have in Chriſt. Reckon "not of what you have in honnurs, or what you "are in greatneſs or parts; but reckon of what you "were in him, before this world was, and of all "the ſpiritual bleſſings wherewith he then bleſſed "you; and likewiſe of what you are now in him, "by an actual union, as then by a virtual and re-"preſentative one." And, in an other place (*w*), "We were one with Chriſt before the world was: "there is one way of union then; Jeſus Chriſt in "the human nature cometh down and repreſents us, "doth what we have to do; here is now another "way of union; Why? This is the reaſon; for "we were one with Chriſt, by his undertaking for "us only from everlaſting; but we were one with "him, by an active repreſentation, when below on "earth." And elſewhere he ſays (*x*): "There is "a threefold union with Chriſt; the firſt is relative, whereby

(*t*) Vol. I. Part I. p. 62. (*u*) Ibid. p. 64. (*w*) Ibid. Part II. p. 215. (*x*) Ibid. Part. III. p. 40.

" whereby we are ſaid to be his, and he ours; as " you know he is called our huſband, and the " church is called his wife; and before huſband " and wife company together, there is ſuch a rela- " tion made by marriage; and the huſband may be " in one place, and the wife in another, ſo that there " can be no communion between them, and yet be " man and wife; ſo is the union between Chriſt and " you as compleat in the relation, before he acts " any thing upon you, though he be in heaven, and " you on earth, as if you were in heaven with him." And ſo in another part of his works (*y*), he makes union to Chriſt to be before the Spirit, or faith, or any grace is given: His words are theſe: " Union " with Chriſt is the firſt fundamental thing of juſtifi- " cation, and ſanctification, and all: Chriſt firſt " takes us, and then ſends his Spirit; he apprehends " us firſt; it is not my being regenerate that puts " me into a right of all thoſe privileges; but it is " Chriſt takes me, and then gives me his Spirit, " faith, holineſs, *&c.* It is through our union with " Chriſt, and the perfect holineſs of his nature, to " whom we are united, that we partake of the pri- " vileges of the covenant of grace." *Witſius* ſays (*z*),

(*y*) Vol. III. Book V. ch. 20. p. 347.

(*z*) Uniti ſunt Chriſto, 1. In aeterno Dei decreto.—2. Unione confoederationis aeternae, qua Chriſtus à Patre conſtitutus eſt caput omnium ſervandorum.—3. Vera & reali unione, ſed quae ab ipſorum parte duntaxat paſſiva eſt, uniuntur Chriſto, quando Spiritus Chriſti eos primum occupat, & novae vitae principium infundit.—Porro quum fides ſit actus ex principio Spiritualis vitae emanans, palam eſt, ſano ſenſu dici poſſe, quod homo electus vere & realiter Chriſto unitus ſit ante actualem fidem. Witſ. Iren. Animadv. c. 6. § 1, 2, 3.

the elect "are united to Chriſt.—1. In the eternal "decree of God.—2. By the union of the eternal "compact, in which Chriſt was conſtituted, by the "Father, the Head of all thoſe who are to be "ſaved—3. By a true and real union, but what "on their part is only paſſive. They are united to "Chriſt when the Spirit of Chriſt firſt lays hold on "them, and infuſes a principle of new life;" And, a little after, adds; "Moreover, ſince faith is an "act flowing from a principle of ſpiritual life, it is "plain, that it may be ſaid in a ſound ſenſe, that "an elect man may be truly and really united "to Chriſt, before actual faith." It is evident, that he allows not only an union to Chriſt in God's eternal purpoſe, but a federal union with him from eternity, as the Head of the elect. Now, for the ſake of theſe men, and others that might be named, you might have forbore the heavy charge of *ignorance* and *enthuſiaſm*; and if not for the ſake of them, yet ſurely for the ſake of your own Father, who aſſerts an eternal repreſentative union of the elect with Chriſt, and that in a book of which you yourſelf was the Editor (*a*). His words are theſe: "It muſt, "indeed, be granted, that God, from eternity, de-"creed to juſtify elect ſinners through Chriſt; and "that as none but they are ever juſtified, ſo all that "were decreed for juſtification, are certainly juſtified. "It muſt alſo be granted, that God, from eternity, "entered into a covenant of grace with Chriſt, as "the Head of elect ſinners; wherein Chriſt, as their Surety,

(*a*) Mr Richard Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Juſtification, p. 14, 15.

" Surety, undertook for their juſtification.—It muſt " likewiſe be granted, that there was a gift of all " grace made to Chriſt for elect ſinners, as he was " their Head and Surety from eternity, 2 *Tim.* i. 9. " It muſt be farther granted, that all elect ſinners " had *a repreſentative union with Chriſt from eternity.* " When Chriſt was choſe as their Head, they were " choſe together with him, as his members." In another page (*b*), he ſays: " Believers may, with the " greateſt delight and comfort, take a ſurvey of their " juſtification, in the different gradations, or pro- " greſſive ſteps of it. God decreed their juſtification, " and they had *a repreſentative union* with Chriſt, as " their Head and Surety, *from eternity.* This lays " ſuch a ſure foundation for their juſtification, as " cannot be overturned by the joint power of men " and devils: They had a legal union with Chriſt, " and were federally juſtified in him, when he roſe " from the dead. This gave them a fundamental " right to juſtification: They are actually united to " Chriſt when they believe, and are then actually " juſtified." You ſee that all wiſe and thoughtful men do not abhor eternal union, as an immoral conceit: If you ſay that theſe men plead for a real and actual union by faith, you cannot deny that they alſo aſſert an union before faith, yea, an eternal union in ſome ſenſe; whereas you have reproached it, as an immoral conceit, and the preachers of it, as ignorant and enthuſiaſtic, without any exception or explanation. You would do well to explain your ſenſe, and clear yourſelf.

(*b*) Mr Richard Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Juſtification, p. 19.

yourſelf. For my own part, I ſhould not greatly care to be reckoned ignorant, and eſpecially enthuſiaſtic, and yet think I may, in a ſafe and ſound ſenſe, inſiſt upon the doctrine of eternal union.

And now, Sir, if it would not be thought tedious, I would freely give you my ſentiments concerning the doctrine of union. I am perſuaded we ſhall not differ about the perſons who are united to Chriſt, that theſe are God's elect, and they only; nor about the nature of the union itſelf, as that it is an union of the whole perſons, ſouls and bodies, of God's people to the whole perſon of Chriſt; though it is not a perſonal union, that is, ſuch an one as the union of the divine and human natures in Chriſt; that it is real, ſolid, and ſubſtantial, and not imaginary; that it is compleat and perfect, and not gradual, or brought about by degrees, but finiſhed at once, as our juſtification is; that it is exceeding cloſe and near, and indiſſoluble, of which there can be no ſeparation. What we are moſt likely to differ about, is, *when* God's elect are united to Chriſt, and *what* is the bond of their union to him. It is generally ſaid, that they are not united to Chriſt until they believe, and that the bond of union is the Spirit on Chriſt's part, and faith on ours. I am ready to think that theſe phraſes are taken up by divines, one from another, without a thorough conſideration of them. It is well, indeed, that Chriſt is allowed any part or ſhare in effecting our union with him; though one ſhould think the whole of it ought to be aſcribed to him, ſince it is ſuch an inſtance of ſurpriſing love and grace, than which there cannot

cannot well be thought to be a greater. Why muſt this union be pieced up with faith on our part? This ſmells ſo prodigious rank of ſelf, that one may juſtly ſuſpect that ſomething rotten and nauſeous lies at the bottom of it. I ſhall therefore undertake to prove, that the bond of union of God's elect to Chriſt, is neither the Spirit on Chriſt's part, nor faith on their part.

1. It is not the Spirit on Chriſt's part. The miſſion of the Spirit into the hearts of God's elect, to regenerate, quicken, and ſanctify them, to apply the bleſſings of grace to them, and ſeal them up to the day of redemption, and the beſtowing of his ſeveral gifts and graces upon them, are in conſequence, and by virtue of a previous and antecedent union of them to the Perſon of Chriſt. They do not firſt receive the Spirit of Chriſt, and then by the Spirit are united to him; but they are firſt united to him, and, by virtue of this union, receive the Spirit of him. To conceive otherwiſe, would be as prepoſterous as to imagine, that the animal ſpirits, which have their ſeat in the head, ſhould be communicated to, and diffuſed throughout the ſeveral parts of the body, without union to the head, or antecedent to an union, and in order to effect it; as this would be juſtly reckoned an abſurdity in nature, ſo is the other no leſs an abſurdity in grace. A perſon is firſt joined, κολλωμενος, glued, cloſely united to Chriſt, and then becomes one Spirit with him; that is, receives, enjoys, and poſſeſſes in meaſure, the ſame Spirit as he does, as the members of an human body do participate of the ſame ſpirit

the

the head does, to which they are united: *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit* (*c*). The caſe is this: Chriſt, as the Mediator of the covenant, and Head of God's elect, received the Spirit without meaſure, that is, a fulneſs of the gifts and graces of the Spirit: Theſe perſons being united to Chriſt, as members to their Head, do, in his own time, receive the Spirit from him, though in meaſure. They are firſt choſen in him, adopted through him, made one with him, become heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt; and then, as the apoſtle ſays, *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (*d*). Beſides, the Spirit of God, in his perſonal inhabitation in the ſaints, in the operations of his grace on their hearts, and in the influences of his power and love on their ſouls, is the evidence, and not the bond of their union to God or Chriſt, and of their communion with them: For *hereby we know*, ſays the apoſtle *John* (*e*), *that he abideth in us, by the Spirit, which he hath given us.* And in another place (*f*), *Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.* There is, indeed, an union, which the Spirit of God is the efficient cauſe of; but this is not a union of God's elect to the Perſon of Chriſt, but an union of believers one with another in a church-ſtate; which the apoſtle deſigns, when he ſays, *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be*

(*c*) 1 Cor. vi. 17. (*d*) Gal. iv. 6. (*e*) 1 John iii. 24. (*f*) Chap. iv. 13.

be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (*g*). The bond of this union is peace and love; hence the ſaints are exhorted to walk *with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (*h*).

2. Neither is faith the bond of union to Chriſt. Thoſe who plead for union by faith, would do well to tell us whether we are united to Chriſt by the habit or principle of faith implanted, or by the act of faith; and ſince there are different acts of faith, they ſhould tell us by which our union is, and whether by the firſt, ſecond, third, *&c.* acts of believing. If we are united to Chriſt by the habit or principle of faith infuſed, then our union is not by faith on our part; becauſe faith, as a principle or habit, is a gift of grace, of the operation of God, and which Chriſt is the Author and Finiſher of. And if we are united to Chriſt by faith, as an act of ours, then we are united to Chriſt by a work, for faith, as an act of ours, is a work; and if by a work, then not by grace; for, *if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but, if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work* (*i*).

I have often wondered that our divines ſhould fix upon the grace of faith to be the bond of union to Chriſt, when there is nothing in it that is of a cementing and uniting nature; it is not a grace of union, but of communion. Had they pitched upon

(*g*) 1 Cor. xii. 13. (*h*) Eph. iv. 2, 3. (*i*) Rom. xi. 6.

upon the grace of love, as the bond of union, it would have appeared much more plauſible; for love is of a knitting and uniting nature; it is the bond of friendſhip among men; it was this which knit the ſoul of *Jonathan* to the ſoul of *David*, ſo that *he loved him as his own ſoul.* This is the bond of union of ſaints one with another; their hearts are *knit together in love.* Hence charity or love is called *the bond of perfectneſs* (*k*). It was this which ſo cloſely joined and cemented the hearts of the firſt Chriſtians one to another, inſomuch that *the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one ſoul* (*l*). Had our divines, I ſay, fixed upon this grace, as the bond of union to Chriſt, it would have looked much more feaſible, and might, perhaps, have been the means of leading them into the truth of the matter. Some, indeed, tell us, that we are united to Chriſt by faith and love; but then they do not conſider love as a part of the bond of union, but only as an evidence of that faith by which we are united; or their meaning is, that that faith by which we are united to Chriſt, is a faith that works by love. Dr *Jacomb* (*m*), indeed, having treated of a myſtical union between Chriſt and his people, the bond of which he makes to be the Spirit on Chriſt's part, and faith on theirs, and of a legal union between Chriſt and believers, the ground of which is Chriſt's ſuretyſhip, ſpeaks of a moral union between them, the bond of which is love,

(*k*) Col. ii. 2. and iii. 14 (*l*) Acts iv. 32.
(*m*) On Rom. viii. 1. p. 51.

love, even "a mutual, reciprocal, hearty love be-"tween Chriſt and believers; he loves them, and "they love him, and, by virtue of this mutual "love, there is a real and cloſe union betwixt "them." And, beſides him, the learned *Alſted* is the only divine I have met with, who makes the bond of union to be the mutual love of Chriſt and his people. "This union, ſays he (*m*), is the "mutual love of Chriſt and believers, or a mutual "obligation of Chriſt and believers to love one "another." Now though there is ſomething of truth in this, yet it is not the naked, pure, and unmixed truth of the matter; for it is not our love to Chriſt, but his love to us, which is alone the real bond of our union to him; he loves his people, and, by loving them, unites them to himſelf; and this is the ground and foundation of all their communion and fellowſhip with him, both in grace and glory.

Faith is no uniting grace, nor are any of its acts of a cementing nature. Faith, indeed, looks to Chriſt, lays hold on him, embraces him, and cleaves unto him; it expects and receives all from Chriſt, and gives him all the glory; but then hereby a ſoul can no more be ſaid to be united to Chriſt, than a beggar may be ſaid to be united to a perſon to whom he applies, of whom he expects alms, to whom he keeps cloſe, from whom he receives, and to whom he is thankful. Faith is a grace of communion,

(*m*) Haec unio eſt mutuus inter Chriſtum & fideles amor, ſive mutua Chriſti & fidelium obligatio ad ſeſe mutuo amandum. Alſted. Lexic. Theolog. c. 10. p. 189.

munion, by which Chriſt dwells in the hearts of his people, which is an act of fellowſhip, as a fruit of union, by which believers live on Chriſt, receive of his fulneſs, grace for grace, and walk on in him as they have received him. Union to Chriſt is the foundation of faith, and of all the acts of believing, as ſeeing, walking, receiving, *&c.* A man may as well be ſaid to ſee, walk, and receive without his head, or without union to it, as one can be ſaid to believe, that is, to ſee, walk, and receive in a ſpiritual ſenſe, without the head, Chriſt; or as antecedent to union to him, or, in order to it. To talk of faith in Chriſt before union to Chriſt, is a moſt prepoſterous, abſurd, and irrational notion.

Faith is the fruit and effect of union, even of what is commonly called vital union. Faith ſtands much in the ſame place, in things ſpiritual, as reaſon does in things natural. There muſt firſt be an union of the ſoul and body of man, before he can be ſaid to live; and there muſt be life in him before there can be reaſon, or the exerciſe of it; man muſt firſt become a living ſoul, ere he can be a reaſonable one: So there muſt be an union of the ſoul to Chriſt before it can ſpiritually live; and there muſt be a principle of ſpiritual life before there can be any faith, or the exerciſe of it. Now as reaſon, and the exerciſe of it, is a ſecond remove from the union of the ſoul and body; ſo is faith, and the exerciſe of it, a ſecond remove from perſons union to Chriſt. There muſt be firſt a vital union to Chriſt, before there can be any believing in him.

This is fitly and fully exemplified in the ſimile of the vine and branches, which Chriſt makes uſe of to expreſs the union of his people to him: *Abide in me, and I in you, ſays he* (*n*), *as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit.* Now faith is a fruit of the Spirit, which grows upon the branches, that are in Chriſt the Vine; but then theſe branches muſt firſt be in the vine, before they bear this fruit; for *the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit* (*o*). The branches of the wild olive tree muſt firſt be ingrafted into the good olive tree, become one with it, and ſo partake of the root and fatneſs of it before they can bring forth good fruit. Could there be the fruit of faith in Chriſt's people before their union to him, then the branches would bear fruit without the vine, without being in it, or united to it, contrary to our Lord's expreſs words. From the whole, it may be ſafely concluded, that union to Chriſt is before faith, and therefore faith cannot be the bond of union; no, not on our part. Vital union is before faith. There always was a fulneſs of life laid up and reſerved for all thoſe who were choſen in Chriſt; there was always life in Chriſt the Head for all his members, which he, when it pleaſes him, in regeneration, communicates to them, and implants in them,

(*n*) John xv. 4, 5. (*o*) Prov. xii. 12.

though there is no activity or exerciſe of this life until they believe (*p*).

The everlaſting love of God the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the bond of the elect's union to the ſacred Three. What may be ſaid of the three divine Perſons in general, is true of each of them in particular. They have all three loved the elect with an everlaſting love, and thereby have firmly and everlaſtingly united them to themſelves. Chriſt has loved them with an everlaſting and unchangeable love, whereby his heart is knit unto them as *Jonathan*'s was to *David*: He loved them as his own ſoul, as his own body, and the members of it. This is that cement which will never looſen, that union knot which can never be untied, that bond which can never be diſſolved, from whence there can be no ſeparation; for *who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? I am perſuaded*, ſays the apoſtle (*q*), *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* There are ſeveral unions which ariſe from, or are branches of this everlaſting love-union, which are all antecedent to our faith in Chriſt.

1. There is an election-union in Chriſt from everlaſting: God *hath choſen us in him, before the*

(*p*) For the further proof of what I aſſert, ſee Mr Cotton's arguments for union before faith, in Dr Chauncy's Neonomianiſm unmaſked, Part II. Debate 11. p. 225.

(*q*) Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.

the foundation of the world (*r*). This is an act and inſtance of everlaſting love, by which the perſons choſen are conſidered in Chriſt, and one with him. Chriſt was choſen as an head, his people as members with him. Nothing is more commonly ſaid by thoſe (*s*) who are eſteemed ſound divines, than this: Now how Chriſt can be conſidered as an head, and the elect as members of him in this eternal act of election, without union to him, is hard to conceive.

Arminius (*t*) and his followers, the *Remonſtrants*, have frequently urged the text now mentioned in favour of election from faith foreſeen, and their argument upon it is this: "None are choſen to ſalvation but in Chriſt; none are in Chriſt but believers, who are ingrafted into Chriſt, and united to him by faith, therefore none are choſen to ſalvation, but thoſe who are believers in Chriſt, are ingrafted into him, and united with him." For they had no other notion of being in Chriſt, but by faith; like ſome others, who yet would be thought to be far from being in their ſcheme. But then,

(*r*) Eph. i. 4.

(*s*) Vid. Act. Synod. Dordrect. p 4, 83, 86, 87. Ameſ. Medull. Theolog. c. 25. §. 27. Walaei Opera, Tom. I. p. 330. Polani Syntag. Theolog. p. 248. Synopſ. Pur. Theolog. Diſp. 24. Theſ. 26. p. 281. Zanch. in Eph. i. 4. Dr Goodwin, Vol. I. Part I. p. 62. Mr Richard Taylor on Juſtification, p. 15. with many others.

(*t*) Armin. Examen Praedeſt. Perkinſ. p. 512, 594, 599. inter opera ejus, Ed. 1631, 4to. Script. adverſ. Coll. Hag. p. 64. Apolog. pro Confeſſ. Remonſtr. c. 18. p. 197. Corvin. contr. Molin. c. 19. p. 284, 285. & adverſ. Bogerman. Par. 2. c. 23. p. 552. Vorſt. Amic. Collat. cum Piſcat. §. 112. p. 233.

among other replies, they have been told, by the *Anti-Remonſtrants* (*u*), "That it is certain that we are choſen and regarded in Chriſt before we were believers; which is fully proved from ſeveral places of ſcripture, which plainly make it appear, that the elect have ſome exiſtence in Chriſt, even before they believe; for unleſs there had been ſome kind of union between Chriſt and the members, Chriſt would not have been their head, nor could he have ſatisfied for them."

2. There is a legal union between Chriſt and the elect from everlaſting: They are one in a law-ſenſe, as ſurety and debtor are one; the bond of this union is Chriſt's ſuretyſhip, which is from everlaſting, and in which Chriſt engaged, as a proof of his ſtrong love and affections to his people. He is the Surety of the better Teſtament, the ἔγγυος, that drew near to God the Father in the name of the elect, ſubſtituted himſelf in their place and ſtead, and laid himſelf under obligation to pay their debts, ſatisfy for their ſins, and procure for them all the bleſſings of grace and glory. This being accepted of by God, Chriſt and the elect were looked upon, in the eye of the law, as one perſon, even as the bondſman and the debtor, among men, are one, in a legal

(*u*) Certum eſt nos eſſe electos & reſpectos in Chriſto antequam eſſemus fideles, quod probatur invictis his locis, Eph. v. 25. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 10. 2 Tim. i. 9. Haec loca evincunt, electorum aliquam in Chriſto exiſtentiam fuiſſe etiam, antequam crederent. Niſi enim aliqua fuiſſet unio inter Chriſtum & membra, Chriſtus non eſſet caput eorum & pro iis ſatisfacere non potuiſſet. Walaeus de electione, inter opera ejus. tom. I. p. 239. Vid. etiam p. 358, 359. & tom. p. 237. & Synopſ. Pur. Theol. Diſp. 24. Theſ. 27. p. 281.

a legal ſenſe; ſo that if one pay the debt, it is the ſame as if the other did it. This legal union ariſing from Chriſt's ſuretyſhip-engagements is the foundation of the imputation of our ſins to Chriſt, and of his ſatisfaction for them, and alſo of the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us, and of our juſtification by it. Chriſt and his people being one, in a law-ſenſe, their ſins become his, and his righteouſneſs becomes theirs.

3. There is a federal union between Chriſt and the elect from everlaſting. As they were conſidered as one, he as head, and they as members, in election; they are likewiſe conſidered after the ſame manner in the covenant of grace. Chriſt has a very great concern in the covenant; he is given for a covenant to the people; he is the Mediator, Surety, and Meſſenger of it. It is made with him, not as a ſingle perſon, but as a common head, repreſenting all the elect, who are given to him, in a federal way, as his ſeed and poſterity. What he promiſed in the covenant, he promiſed for them, and on their account; and what he received, he received for them, and on their account. Hence grace is ſaid to be given to them in him before the world began (*w*); and they are ſaid to be bleſſed with *all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt* (*x*).

4. There is a natural union between Chriſt and his people; for *both he that ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified, are all of one*; that is, of one nature; *for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them*

 brethren,

(*w*) 2 Tim. i. 9. (*x*) Eph. i. 3.

brethren (*y*). This is an union in time, but is the effect of Chriſt's love before time: *Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame* (*z*). The nature he aſſumed is the ſame with that of all mankind, but was taken to him with a peculiar regard to the elect, the children, the ſpiritual ſeed of *Abraham*, who are *members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones*. Now this natural union, which is the fruit of Chriſt's everlaſting love, is antecedent to the faith of New-Teſtament-ſaints.

5. It is ſufficiently evident, that there is a repreſentative union between Chriſt and the elect, both from everlaſting and in time, which is independent on, and prior to their believing in him. He repreſented them as their head in election, and in the covenant of grace, as has been already obſerved; and ſo he did, when upon the croſs, and in the grave, when he roſe from the dead, *entered into heaven, and ſat down at the right hand of God*. Hence they are ſaid to be crucified with him, dead with him, buried with him, riſen with him, yea to be made *to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus*.

Now all theſe ſeveral unions take their riſe from, and have their foundation in the everlaſting love of Chriſt to his people; which is the grand, original, ſtrong, and firm bond of union between him and them, and is the ſpring of all that fellowſhip and communion they have with him in time, and ſhall

(*y*) Heb. ii. 11. (*z*) Heb. ii. 14.

ſhall have to all eternity. It is from hence that the Spirit of God is ſent down into our hearts to regenerate and renew us, and faith is wrought in our ſouls by the Spirit. Faith does not give us a being in Chriſt, or unite us to him; it is the fruit, effect, and evidence of our being in Chriſt, and union to him. It is true, indeed, that God's elect do not know their being in Chriſt, and union to him, until they believe; then what was before ſecret is made manifeſt; and becauſe things are ſometimes ſaid to be, when they are only manifeſted to be, hence the people of Chriſt are ſaid to be in Chriſt, when they are made new creatures; *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature* (*a*). Being a new creature, does not put a man into Chriſt, but is the evidence of his being there; and without which he neither knows, nor ought he to profeſs himſelf to be in Chriſt: And ſo likewiſe, in another place, it is ſaid, *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his* (*b*). He may be one of his choſen and redeemed ones, though he has not the Spirit of Chriſt as yet; but he cannot know this until he has the Spirit of Chriſt; for *no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord*, that is, his Lord, *but by the Holy Ghoſt* (*c*). The apoſtle *Paul* (*d*) takes notice of ſome that *were in Chriſt* before him: all God's elect were choſen together in Chriſt, not one before another: They had all together a being in him; but this in converſion is made known to one before another. There are different manifeſtations of union to dif-

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 17. (*b*) Rom. viii. 9.
(*c*) 1 Cor. xii. 3. (*d*) Rom. xvi. 7.

ferent perſons, and to the ſame perſons at different times; for which Chriſt prays, when he ſays, *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me; and the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me* (*e*). The full manifeſtation of it will be in heaven, when the ſaints ſhall be with Chriſt where he is, and behold his glory, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, as the fruit of their eternal union to him.

I ſhould now, Sir, have cloſed this letter, were it not for a paſſage in your diſcourſe, *Of the Doctrine of Grace, as it encourages Holineſs*; in which, I apprehend, you have poured much contempt on ſeveral valuable and excellent truths of the goſpel: I will repeat your words, and take leave to make ſome few ſtrictures on them. They are theſe (*f*): "There have been ſome, who, by their life and "converſation, have ſhewed, that they were far "from being enemies to holineſs, who have amuſed "themſelves with fancies about God's loving and "delighting in his elect, while they were in a ſtate "of nature; of his ſeeing no ſin in his people, and "good

(*e*) John xvii. 21, 22, 23.

(*f*) See a Defence of ſome important Doctrines of the Goſpel, by ſeveral Miniſters, Vol. II. p. 512.

" good works not being neceſſary to ſalvation; and " who have been forward to condemn preſſing men " to duty, as legal preaching; and to ſpeak of ex- " horting to repentance, mortification, and ſelf- " denial, as low and mean ſtuff."

I. I obſerve that you eſteem the doctrine of God's loving his elect, while in a ſtate of nature, a fancy; and that thoſe who hold this doctrine do but amuſe themſelves with a fancy. I muſt beg leave to ſay, that if it is a fancy, it is a ſcriptural one: I would not willingly ſay or write any thing that is contrary to the purity and holineſs of God, or has a tendency to embolden vicious perſons in a courſe of ſin and wickedneſs; and yet cannot help ſaying, that the doctrine of God's everlaſting, unchangeable, and invariable love to his elect, through every ſtate and condition into which they come, is written as with a ſun-beam in the ſacred writings.

1. God's love to his elect is not of yeſterday; it does not begin with their love to him, *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us* (*g*). It was bore in his heart towards them long before they *were delivered from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of his dear Son.* It does not commence in time, but bears date from eternity, and is the ground and foundation of the elect's being called in time out of darkneſs into marvellous light; *I have loved thee*, ſays the Lord to the church, *with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee* (*b*); that is, in effectual vocation. Many are

(*g*) 1 John iv. 19. (*b*) Jer. xxxi. 3.

are the inſtances which might be given in proof of the antiquity of God's love to his elect, and as it is antecedent to their being brought out of a ſtate of nature. God's chooſing them in Chriſt before the foundation of the world, was an act of his love towards them, the fruit and effect of it; for election pre-ſuppoſes love. His making an everlaſting covenant with his Son, ordered in all things, and ſure, on account of thoſe he choſe in him; his ſetting him up as the Mediator of the covenant from everlaſting; his donation of grace to them in him before the world began; his putting their perſons into his hands, and ſo making them his care and charge, are ſo many demonſtrative proofs of his early love to them; for can it ever be imagined that there ſhould be a choice of perſons made, a covenant of grace ſo well formed and ſtored, a promiſe of life granted, and a ſecurity made, both of perſons and grace, and yet no love all this while?

2. The love of God to his elect is unchangeable and unalterable; it is as invariable as his own nature and being; yea, *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him* (*i*). Hence it is that the bleſſings of his grace are irreverſible, becauſe they are the gifts of him, who is *the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning*. Hence alſo it is that the ſalvation of God's elect does not ſtand upon a precarious foundation, as it would, if his love changed as theirs does; but *he is the Lord, who changes not, and therefore the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed*. The ſeveral

(*i*) 1 John iv. 16.

ſeveral changes the elect of God paſs under, through the fall of *Adam*, and their own actual tranſgreſſions, make no change or alteration in the love of God. The love of God makes a change in them when he converts them, but no change or alteration is made in God's love; that does not admit of more or leſs; it cannot be ſaid to be more ardent and intenſe at one time, than at another; it is always invariably the ſame in his heart. Love produced a wonderful and ſurpriſing change in him, who was afterwards the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, and of a blaſpheming, perſecuting, and injurious *Saul*, made a believer in Chriſt, and a preacher of the everlaſting goſpel: But then this produced no change in God, nor in his love. God ſometimes changes the diſpenſations of his providence to his people, but he never changes his love; he ſometimes hides his face from them, and chides them, in a fatherly manner; but at all times he loves them: He loves when he rebukes and chaſtens, and though *he hides his face for a moment* from them, *yet with everlaſting kindneſs will he have mercy on them*; for he has ſaid, *The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed* (*k*). There is, indeed, no ſenſible manifeſtation of God's love to his elect before converſion, or while they are in a ſtate of nature; and it muſt be allowed, that the manifeſtations of it to their ſouls after converſion, are not always alike; and that God's love appears more

(*k*) Iſa. liv. 10.

more evident in ſome inſtances and acts of it, than in others; yet ſtill this love, as in his own heart, is unchangeably and invariably the ſame, as it needs muſt be, if he is God. Since then God's love to his elect is from everlaſting, and never changes upon any conſideration whatever, why ſhould God's love to his elect, while in a ſtate of nature, be accounted a fancy, and thoſe who maintain it, be repreſented as amuſing themſelves with a fancy?

3. There are inſtances to be given of God's love to his elect, while they are in a ſtate of nature: I have already obſerved ſome inſtances of it to his elect, from eternity. I will juſt mention one or two inſtances of it to them in time, and which reſpect them, while in a ſtate of nature. Chriſt's coming into this world, and dying in the room and ſtead of the elect, are, at once, proofs, both of his own and his Father's love to them; God ſo loved them, as to give his only begotten Son; and Chriſt ſo loved them, as to give himſelf for them, in a way of offering and ſacrifice for their ſins; at which time they were conſidered as ungodly, as being yet ſinners, as enemies in their minds, by wicked works, and without love to God: For the apoſtle ſays (*l*), *When we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly. God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life.* Now certainly

(*l*) Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

certainly theſe perſons were in a ſtate of nature, who are ſaid to be "without ſtrength, to be ungodly, ſinners and enemies;" and yet God commended his love towards them, when and while they were ſuch, in a matchleſs inſtance of it: And ſo the apoſtle *John* (*m*) makes uſe of this circumſtance, reſpecting the ſtate of God's elect, to magnify, to ſet off, and illuſtrate the greatneſs of God's love: *Herein is love*, ſays he; *not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.* From whence it may be ſtrongly concluded, that God loved his people while in a ſtate of nature, when enemies to him, deſtitute of all grace, without a principle of love to him, or faith in him. Again, the quickening of God's elect, when dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, the drawing of them to Chriſt with the cords of powerful and efficacious grace in effectual vocation, are inſtances of his ſpecial grace and favour, and fruits and effects of his everlaſting love to them. *God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt* (*n*). The time of the effectual vocation of God's people being come, fixed in his everlaſting counſels and covenant, it is a time of open love to their ſouls, and that time becomes a time of life; for ſeeing them wallowing in their blood, in all the impurities of their nature, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind, *he ſays unto them, when in their blood, live; yea, when in their blood, he ſays unto them, live.* The Spirit of God, as an inſtance of God's

(*m*) 1 John iv. 10. (*n*) Eph. ii. 4, 5.

God's love, is ſent down into their hearts in order to begin, carry on, and finiſh a work of grace, when he finds them in a ſtate of nature, dead in ſin, devoid of all grace, impotent to all that is ſpiritually good: *We ourſelves alſo*, ſays the apoſtle (*o*), *were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another*, ὅτε, *when the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.* If God did not love his elect, while in a ſtate of nature, they muſt for ever remain in that ſtate, ſince they are unable to help themſelves out of it; and it is only the love, grace, and mercy of God, which engage his almighty power to deliver them from thence. There are three gifts and inſtances of God's love to his people before converſion, which are not to be matched by any inſtance or inſtances of love after converſion; the one is the gift of God himſelf to them in the everlaſting covenant; which covenant runs thus: *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people:* The other is the gift of his Son, to ſuffer and die in their room and ſtead, and ſo obtain eternal redemption for them: The third is the gift of his Spirit to them, to convince them of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment. And now what greater inſtance is there of God's love to his people after converſion? If the heavenly

(*o*) Titus iii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

heavenly glory, with all the entertaining joys of that delightful ſtate, ſhould be fixed upon, I deny it to be a greater inſtance of God's love, than the gift of himſelf, his Son and Spirit; and, indeed, all that God does in time, or will do to all eternity, is only telling his people how much he loved them from everlaſting; all is but, as it were, a comment upon, and an opening of that antient act of his; nor has this doctrine any tendency to licentiouſneſs, or to diſcourage the performance of good works. The conſideration of this, that God loved me before I loved him, nay, when I was an enemy to him; that his thoughts were employed about my ſalvation, when I had no thoughts of him, nor concern for myſelf, lays me under ten thouſand times greater obligations, to fear, ſerve, and glorify him; than ſuch a conſideration as this, that he began to love me when I loved him, or becauſe I have loved him, can poſſibly do. Why then ſhould this doctrine be accounted a meer fancy, which has ſo good a foundation, both in the word of God, and in the experience of his people; and the maintainers of it, traduced as amuſers of themſelves with fancies?

II. Perhaps you will ſay, it is not merely the notion of God's loving his elect in a ſtate of nature, but his loving them ſo as to delight in them, while in that ſtate, that you condemn as a fancy, and the defenders of it, as amuſing themſelves with a fancy; ſince you join love and delight together, when you expreſs yourſelf ſo freely on this head. There is a diſtinction

diſtinction which you may imagine will help you, which is that of a love of pity and benevolence, and of complacency and delight; with the firſt of theſe, ſay ſome, God loved his elect before converſion, and while in a ſtate of nature, but not with the latter. It is an idle and ill-grounded diſtinction of ſome ignorant, trifling, popiſh ſchoolmen, which ſome of our grave divines have been fond of, and have uſed, when they have thought it would ſerve their purpoſe; though it is ſubverſive of the very nature and perfections of God, and repreſents him as altogether ſuch an one as ourſelves, ſubject to change; that his love, like ours, alters, and by degrees increaſes, and, from a love of pity and benevolence, paſſes into a love of complacency and delight; it ſuppoſes that God firſt views his elect in a miſerable ſtate and condition, with whoſe miſery he is touched, and is filled with bowels of compaſſion and pity towards them, which occaſion ſome velleities or wiſhes in his mind for their good; and theſe riſe up at length into reſolutions and purpoſes to do them good; which when he has, at leaſt in ſome meaſure, executed, his affections glow, his love grows more ardent, and iſſues in complacency and delight. If this is not to make God changeable, and bring him down into the rank of mutable creatures, I know not what is. I could tell the friends of this diſtinction, though it may be no news to them, and perhaps they may find their account in it, that theſe ſame popiſh ſchoolmen have diſtinguiſhed the love of God into *amor ordinativus*, a

love

love in ordination, purpoſe, and deſign, and into *amor collativus*, a love in gift, which is actually beſtowed. This may ſuit well enough with the divinity of ſome men, who ſeem to be ready to give into ſuch ſchemes as theſe; that God's love to his elect, before converſion, is only a purpoſe to love them when they are converted; that eternal election, is only a decree to elect perſons in time; that the everlaſting covenant is made with perſons when they believe, of which faith, repentance, and ſincere obedience, are the conditions; and that there is no reconciliation of God's elect to him before faith; that the ſufferings and death of Chriſt only make God reconcileable, but not reconciled; with ſuch-like things as theſe, which I am almoſt tempted to call *low* and *mean* ſtuff. It is high time that theſe diſtinctions about the love of God, with that of an antecedent and conſequent one, were laid aſide, which ſo greatly obſcure the glory of God's unchangeable love and grace. It muſt be an odd ſort of love, among men, that is ſeparate from delight in the object loved. The philoſopher tells me (*p*), that benevolence is properly neither friendſhip nor love; and that as benevolence is the beginning of friendſhip, ſo delight and pleaſure, at the ſight of the object, is the beginning of love; and that no man can be ſaid to love, who is not firſt delighted with the form or idea of the object. Indeed, I cannot ſee that that can be love, which is without any

(*p*) Η μεν ευνοια, φιλια μεν τοιουτον, ου μεν εστιν γε φιλια. — Αλλ' ουδε φιλησις εστιν — εοικε δη αρχη φιλιας ειναι, ωσπερ του ερωτος, η δια της οψεως ηδονη· μη γαρ προηδεως τη ιδεα, ουθεις ερα, Ariſtot. Ethic. l. 9. c. 5.

delight in the object ſaid to be loved: If a man ſhould ſay to his wife, I love you well, I wiſh you well, and am willing to do you all the good offices I am able; but, at the ſame time, I can take no delight in your perſon, nor pleaſure in your company; would not this be eſteemed a contradiction to his expreſſions of love to her? So if a father ſhould ſay to his child, I wiſh you well, I pity you in what you do amiſs, and I deſign to do ſomething for you, which may be for your good, but I can take no delight and pleaſure in you as a child of mine; what kind of love would this be thought to be? The ſame may be obſerved in many other ſuch-like inſtances.

God's love to his Son, as Mediator, is an everlaſting love; *Thou lovedſt me*, ſays Chriſt (*q*), *before the foundation of the world.* This love was a love of complacency and delight; for Chriſt as Mediator, was from everlaſting, *then by him*, that is, the Father (*r*), *as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.* Now God loves his Elect with the ſame love he loves his Son as Mediator. Hence Chriſt prays for the open and manifeſt union between him and his people; *That*, ſays he (*s*), *the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.* If God therefore has loved his Son, as Mediator, from everlaſting, with a love of complacency and delight, and he has loved his elect from everlaſting with the ſame love he has loved him, then he muſt have loved his elect from everlaſting with a love of complacency

(*q*) John xvii. 24. (*r*) Prov. viii. 30. (*s*) John xvii. 23.

placency and delight: And, indeed, how can it otherwiſe be, ſince the elect were always in Chriſt their Head, in whom they were choſen, before the foundation of the world? And they could not be conſidered in him but as righteous perſons, through his righteouſneſs, with which God is always well pleaſed, becauſe by it the law is magnified, and made honourable; and ſo Chriſt is often ſaid (*t*) to be God's beloved Son, *in whom*, not *with* whom, *he is well pleaſed*; which deſigns not his perſon ſingly, but all the elect, as conſidered in him, who, together with Chriſt, are the objects of God's eternal delight and pleaſure.

It is certain, that Jeſus Chriſt has, from everlaſting, loved the elect with a love of complacency and delight; for "from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, when there were no depths nor fountains, before the mountains and hills were brought into being, while as yet God had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the higheſt part of the duſt of the world, Chriſt's delights were with the ſons of Men (*u*)." The word (*w*) שעשועים rendered *delights*, is expreſſive of the moſt intimous, ſweet, raviſhing delight and pleaſure; and it being not only in the plural number, but alſo having its

(*t*) Matt. iii. 17. and xvii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 17. (*u*) Prov. viii. 31.

(*w*) Vocem שעשועים quod attinet, novies eandem deprehendimus in ſacris, & ſemper quidem de oblectatione intima, multiplici, ſuaviſſimaque, quando rem aliquam non ſatis intueri, meditari aut amplexari poſſumus, ulteriori ſemper eo propendentes cupidine; nam radix eſt שעה aſpexit, ubi geminatio radicalium radicis quoque geminat ſignificatum. Gejer. in Prov. viii. 30.

radical letters, eſpecially its two firſt (*x*) radical letters, doubled, which, in the *Hebrew* language, increaſes (*y*) the ſignification of the word; it ſets forth that exceeding great delight and pleaſure which Chriſt had in his people from everlaſting; nay, he not only took delight in the perſons of the elect, as they were preſented to him in the glaſs of his Father's purpoſes and decrees, but took pleaſure alſo in the fore-views of the very ſpots of ground where he knew his people would dwell: And hence he ſays (*z*), that he was *rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth.* Now why God the Father ſhould not, from everlaſting, love the elect with the ſame love his Son did, I know not.

Nothing is more evident, than that God's chooſing his people in Chriſt before the foundation of the world, is an act of love; and I will venture to ſay it is an act of love, founded upon, and ſpringing from his delight in them; even as God's loving and chooſing the people of *Iſrael* (which was an emblem and repreſentation of his ſpecial love to, and choice of the true and ſpiritual *Iſrael* of God) is owing to that delight he had in them; for it is ſaid, *The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them; and he choſe their ſeed after them, even you above all the people, as at this day* (*a*). And, indeed, all the favours and bleſſings which God beſtows on his people

(*x*) Vid. Aben Ezra in Pſalm xlv. 2.

(*y*) So פתלתל is very perverſe, *Deut.* xxxii 5 ירקרק very yellow, *Pſalm* lxviii. 13. שחרחרת very black, *Cant.* i. 6. יפיפית exceedingly fairer, *Pſalm* xlv. 2. חמרמרו very much troubled, *Lam.* i. 20. with many other inſtances of the like kind.

(*z*) Prov. viii. 31. (*a*) Deut. x. 15.

people in time, ariſe from his delight in them. His bringing them out of darkneſs into light, out of a ſtate of nature into a ſtate of grace, out of diſtreſſes and difficulties of every kind, ſprings from his delight in them: *He brought me forth alſo into a large place*, ſays *David* (*b*); *he delivered me, becauſe he delighted in me.* In a word, the whole ſalvation of the elect is owing to God's love of delight, with which he loves them. *The Lord taketh pleaſure in his people*; and, as a fruit and effect of that, *he will beautify the meek with ſalvation:* He has promiſed to *rejoice over them, to do them good*; and it is ſaid, *he will ſave, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will reſt in his love, he will rejoice over thee with ſinging* (*c*).

Some, perhaps, will ſay, that the elect, while in a ſtate of nature, are deſtitute of faith, which is very true; and ſince *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God* (*d*), he can take no delight in them, while in that ſtate. The *Remonſtrants* (*e*) have urged this text in favour of election, *ex fide previſa*; and their argument upon it is this: "That if it is impoſſible to pleaſe God without faith, it is impoſſible that any ſhould be choſe by God unto ſalvation without faith; ſeeing to be choſen unto ſalvation, is the higheſt inſtance of God's love and good-will to man that he can ſhew him:" But they have been told, by the *Anti-Remonſtrants*, that "though election is an act of God's great love and good pleaſure, yet it may be without faith, ſince there is a ſenſe in which perſons

(*b*) Pſalm xviii. 19. (*c*) Ibid. cxlix. 4. Jer. xxxii. 41. Zeph. iii. 17. (*d*) Heb. xi. 6.
(*e*) Vid. Script. Adverſ. Coll. Hag. p. 63.

may be ſaid to pleaſe God before faith *(f)*; for God is ſaid even *to manifeſt his love to his enemies*, Rom. v. 8, 10. If then he loved them when enemies, they muſt needs pleaſe him before they believed;" and that *(g)* "although whatſoever is done without faith may be diſpleaſing to God, yet God may be ſaid to love ſome perſons, whoſe actions diſpleaſe him: So he loved the Perſon of *Paul* before he was converted to the faith of Chriſt; yea, that there is a certain complacency in the perſon, if it be proper ſo to ſay, before his works and faith pleaſe God." And it is eaſy to obſerve, that the apoſtle is ſpeaking, not of the complacency which God has in the perſons of his people, but of that which he has in their works and actions. Now no works without faith can pleaſe God, ſuch as praying, reading, hearing, and the like; becauſe *whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin*. It is in this ſenſe *(h)*, that *they that are in the fleſh*, that is, who are unregenerate, are in a ſtate of nature, *cannot pleaſe God*; for it may be as well expected *to gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thiſtles*, as that good works well-pleaſing to God ſhould be done by an evil man: But though men can do nothing without faith, that can pleaſe God, yet this does not hinder,

(f) Dicitur enim Deus etiam dilectionem ſuam manifeſtare erga hoſtes ſuos, Rom. v. 8, 10. ſi ipſos dilexit etiam quum hoſtes eſſent, neceſſe eſt placuerint ipſi antequam crederent. Ibid. p. 71.

(g) Quamvis autem Deo diſplicent, quicquid fit ſine fide, poteſt tamen dici deum amare quasdam perſonas, quarum facta ei diſplicent; ſic perſonam Pauli amabat, prius quam ad fidem Chriſti converteretur—denique eſt quaedam (ſi fas ita loqui) complacentia perſonae antequam ejus opera & fides Deo placeant. Molinaei Enodatio Graviſſ. Quaeſt. Tract. 7. c. 3. p. 269, 270.

(h) Rom. viii. 8.

hinder, but that the perſons of God's elect, as conſidered in Chriſt, may be well-pleaſing to God before faith, and without it.

It may be further objected, that God's elect, while in a ſtate of nature, are *children of wrath, even as others*, and therefore cannot be the objects of God's love and delight; for how can they be children of wrath, and yet objects of love at one and the ſame time? To which I reply, that "a perſon may be the object of love and delight, and of diſpleaſure and wrath, at one and the ſame time, in a different reſpect. It is ſaid of the *Jews* (*i*), as concerning the goſpel, *they are enemies for your ſakes*; but touching the election, *they are beloved for the Father's ſake.* But this will be better exemplified in the inſtance of Jeſus Chriſt, "who ſtanding in two different relations, and ſuſtaining two different capacities, was at one and the ſame time the object of his Father's love and wrath: as he was the Son of God, he was always the object of his love and delight; but as he was the ſinner's ſurety, and while bearing the ſins of his people in his own body on the tree, he was the object of his diſpleaſure and wrath, which he ſenſibly felt, and therefore it is ſaid (*k*), *Thou haſt caſt off and abhorred; thou haſt been wroth with thine anointed.* And yet even then, when he poured out his wrath to the uttermoſt on him, on the account of his people's ſins, when he ordered juſtice to draw its ſword, and ſheath it in him, his love towards him, as his Son, was not in the leaſt abated." Thus the elect of God being conſidered in different views, may

(*i*) Rom. xi. 28. (*k*) Pſalm lxxxix. 38.

be truly ſaid to be children of wrath, and objects of love at one and the ſame time: conſider them in *Adam*, and under the covenant of works, they are children of wrath, they are deſerving of the wrath of God, and are expoſed to the curſe of the law; but then as conſidered in Chriſt, and under the covenant of grace, they always were, and ever will be, the objects of God's love and delight.

This doctrine, I apprehend, is no ways contrary to the purity and holineſs of God's nature; it does not follow, that becauſe God loves and delights in his elect, while in a ſtate of nature, that he loves and delights in their ſins; God *is of purer eyes than to behold evil*, and cannot look upon ſin with any approbation or delight (*l*). He *is not a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs, neither ſhall evil dwell with him*. We are obliged to diſtinguiſh between the perſons and ſins of God's people after converſion; it is allowed that God loves and delights in their perſons, though he hates their ſins. Now why the ſame diſtinction may not be allowed before converſion, as after, I ſee not; ſince it is not any thing that is done by them, nor any thing that is wrought in them, that is the ground and foundation of God's love to and delight in them; but his love to and delight in them is the ground and foundation of all that he does for them, or works in them. No doubt, what he works in them is well-pleaſing in his ſight, but their acceptance with God, and their perſons being well-pleaſing to him, does not lie in this, but in the beloved. When, Sir, theſe things are conſidered

(*l*) Hab. i. 13. Pſalm v. 4.

conſidered by you, I hope you will no longer eſteem it a fancy, that God ſhould love and delight in his people while in a ſtate of nature. But I go on,

III. To conſider another evangelic truth, which, indeed, is the ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel, and with the proof of which the ſcripture abounds, though you are pleaſed to condemn it as a fancy, and that is, that "God ſees no ſin in his people." I know this doctrine has been moſt odiouſly traduced, and moſt vilely miſrepreſented; but, I hope, when ſome few things are obſerved, it will plainly appear not to be a fancy, or a freak of ſome diſtempered minds, but a moſt glorious and comfortable doctrine of the goſpel, and without which the goſpel muſt ceaſe to be *good* news and *glad* tidings to the ſons of men.

1*ſt*, When it is aſſerted that God ſees no ſin in his people, the meaning is not, that there is no ſin in believers, nor any committed by them, or that their ſins are no ſins, or that their ſanctification is perfect in this life.

1. Sin is in the beſt of ſaints; to ſay otherwiſe is contrary to ſcripture, and to all the experience of God's people; *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us* (*m*). The ingenuous confeſſion of the ſaints, their groans and complaints, and that continual war between fleſh and ſpirit they feel in themſelves, are ſo many proofs of ſin's being in them; nay, it is not only in them, but it lives in them. It is true, indeed, they do not live in ſin, for then there would be no difference between

(*m*) 1 John i. 8.

between them and unregenerate perſons; to live in ſin, is not only unbecoming, but contrary to the grace of God: but ſtill ſin lives in believers; though there is an inward principle of grace, and a mortification of the outward actions of ſin, and a *putting off concerning the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful luſts*; yet this old man is not changed nor removed, much leſs deſtroyed. Moreover, ſin is not merely in believers now and then, by fits and ſtarts, as we ſay, but it *dwells* in them. Hence the apoſtle calls it, *Sin that dwelleth in me* (*n*); where it is not idle, but active and buſy; it hinders all the good, and does all the miſchief it can; it makes war againſt the ſoul, and ſometimes brings into captivity.

2. Sin is not only in the beſt of ſaints, but is alſo committed by them: *There is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good and ſinneth not* (*o*); nor is there any ſin, but what has been, or may be committed by believers, excepting the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: Their daily ſlips and falls, their frequent prayers for the diſcoveries of pardoning grace, and the applications of Chriſt's blood, which cleanſeth from all ſin, confirm the truth of this. It is true, the apoſtle *John* ſays, that *whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God* (*p*); that is, as born of God, he neither does, nor can commit ſin. What is that which is born of God? The *new creature*; the other *I*, diſtinguiſhed from ſin that dwelleth in him: this never did, nor can commit

(*n*) Rom. vii. 17, 20. (*o*) Eccl. vii. 20. (*p*) 1 John iii. 9.

mit ſin; there are an *old* man and a *new* man in regenerate perſons; the new man never ſins, the old man does nothing elſe but ſin; there are *fleſh* and *ſpirit* in the ſaints; all ſinful works are the works of the fleſh, as all good works are the fruits of the Spirit. The work of grace, though imperfect, is not impure; nothing impure ſprings from it, nor is any thing impure to be attributed to it.

3. The ſins of believers are ſins, as well as the ſins of others: they are of the ſame kind, and are equally tranſgreſſions of the law, as others are: Murder and adultery, committed by *David*, were ſins in him, as well as they are as committed by others; yea, oftentimes the ſins of believers are attended with more aggravating circumſtances than the ſins of other men, being acted againſt light and knowledge, love, grace, and mercy. Though believers are juſtified from all ſin by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and have all their ſins pardoned through Chriſt's blood, yet their ſins do not hereby ceaſe to be ſins. Juſtification from ſin by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and pardon of ſin through Chriſt's blood, free them from obligation to puniſhment due to ſin, but do not deſtroy the nature of ſin.

4. The work of ſanctification is imperfect in this life; it is a good work begun, but not finiſhed; there is ſomething lacking in the faith of the greateſt believer; love is not come to its full growth; and as for knowledge, it is but in part. There is a twofold ſanctification, the one in Chriſt; this is compleat and perfect; the other is derived from Chriſt, and

(*q*) 1 John iii. 9.

and wrought in the ſoul by the Spirit of Chriſt; this at preſent is imperfect. There is, indeed, a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; that is to ſay, the new creature has all its parts, but theſe are not grown up to the perfection they will arrive unto. The beſt of ſaints need freſh ſupplies of grace, which they would not, were they perfect: They diſclaim perfection in themſelves, though they wiſh for it both in themſelves and others; when therefore it is ſaid, that "God ſees no ſin in his people," neither of theſe things are deſigned by it.

2*dly*, God's ſeeing no ſin in his people, does not impeach his omniſcience; nor is it to be conſidered as referring to the article of providence, but to the article of juſtification, as I ſhall ſhew preſently. God is omniſcient, he knows and ſees all perſons and things; nothing is or can be hid from his all-ſeeing eye: *His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings; there is no darkneſs nor ſhadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves* (*q*). All the actions of men, whether good or bad, are known to him, with their ſecret ſprings and principles from whence they flow: He ſees the ſins of his own people, as well as the ſins of others, both in their firſt motions, and in their open productions; *The Lord's throne is in heaven, his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men; the Lord trieth the righteous* (*r*). About this there is no debate; they muſt be ſtupid indeed, if there be any; for my part, I never heard of any who deny that the omniſcience of God extends to the ſins of his people;

(*q*) Job xxxiv. 21, 22. (*r*) Pſalm xi. 4, 5.

people; it never was thought of, or deſigned, by this aſſertion, to limit or deny the omniſcience of God; nor is it limited or denied by it. Though the phraſes of *ſeeing* and *knowing*, are uſed as ſynonymous in the article of providence, yet never in the article of juſtification; there they are always diſtinguiſhed: knowledge and ſight are two things; the one belongs to the attribute of God's omniſcience, the other to the attribute of his juſtice: When therefore it is ſaid, that God ſees no ſin in his people, the meaning is not, that he does not, with his omniſcient eye, ſee and know ſin to be in them; but he does not ſee any iniquity in them with his eye of *juſtice*, or ſo as to *puniſh* them for their ſins, or require ſatisfaction at their hands for them.

3*dly*, Nor is the meaning of this propoſition, that "God ſees no ſin in his people," that he takes no notice of them, nor reſents them, nor chaſtiſes them, in a fatherly way, on the account of them. God does not, indeed, puniſh his people for their ſins in a way of *vindictive* wrath and juſtice; for this is contrary to his juſtice, and muſt overthrow the ſatisfaction of Chriſt; for either Chriſt has perfectly ſatisfied for the ſins of his people, or he has not; if he has not, they muſt ſatisfy for them themſelves; if he has, it is contrary to the juſtice of God to puniſh for ſin twice, or to require ſatisfaction, both of the ſurety and the ſinner: but though God does not puniſh his people for their ſins, yet he *chaſtiſes* them in a fatherly way; he takes notice of their ſins, lays his hand upon them,

them, in order to bring them to a ſenſe and acknowledgement of them: *If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes; nevertheleſs, my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail* (*t*).

4*thly*, Though God ſees ſin in his people, as being but in part ſanctified, yet he ſees no ſin in them, as they are perfectly juſtified; though he ſees ſin in them, with his eye of omniſcience, yet not with his eye of revenging juſtice; though he ſees them, in reſpect of his providence, which reaches all things, yet not in reſpect of juſtification; though he takes notice of his peoples ſins ſo as to chaſtiſe them, in a *fatherly* way, for their good; yet he does not ſee them, take notice of them, and obſerve them in a *judicial* way, ſo as to impute them to them, or require ſatisfaction for them: *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them* (*u*): No, he has imputed them to Chriſt, he has beheld them on him, he has charged them to him, and Chriſt has made full ſatisfaction for them; and therefore *who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died* (*w*). God will not require ſatisfaction at the hands of his people for their ſins; he will

(*t*) Pſalm lxxxix. 30—33. (*u*) 2 Cor. v. 19.
(*w*) Rom. viii. 33, 34.

will not puniſh them on the account of them; they ſhall never enter into condemnation; for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit* (*x*). Was God to ſee ſin in his people in this ſenſe, and proceed againſt them in a forenſic way, he muſt act contrary to his juſtice, and ſet aſide the ſatisfaction of his Son. A few things will make it plainly appear, that God ſees no ſin in his juſtified ones, as ſuch.

Firſt, This will be evident, if we conſider what Chriſt has done with reſpect to the ſins of his people. Theſe have been removed from them to him; they have been placed to his account, imputed to him, and laid upon him. *All we, like ſheep, have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all* (*y*); which he has bore in his own body on the tree; yea, he is *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world*; he has removed the iniquity of his people in one day: As *he was wounded for their tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for their ſins*, ſo he has waſhed them from their ſins in that blood of his, which cleanſeth from all ſin; *by his righteouſneſs he juſtifies them from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes; and by the ſacrifice of himſelf, he has put away ſin for ever; yea, he has finiſhed tranſgreſſion, made an end of ſins, has made reconciliation for iniquity, and has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs.* This is the language both of

(*x*) Rom. viii. 1. (*y*) Iſa. liii. 6.

of the Old and New Teſtament; and if this be the caſe, as it certainly is, God does not, and cannot ſee iniquity in his people, ſince all their iniquity has been transferred on Chriſt, and it is all done away by him.

Secondly, This will be yet more evident, if we conſider what God the Father has done on the account of the blood, righteouſneſs, ſacrifice, and ſatisfaction of his Son. He has freely forgiven all the ſins of his people for Chriſt's ſake; he has covered them with a covering of mercy, ſo as they are not viſible; he has blotted them out of his ſight, ſo as they are not legible to the eye of juſtice; yea, he has caſt them all behind his back, and into the depths of the ſea; inſomuch that the *iniquity of Iſrael ſhall be ſought for, and there ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, and they ſhall not be found*: ſuch ſtrong expreſſions as theſe from the mouth of the Lord of hoſts, will ſufficiently bear us out in aſſerting, that "God ſees no ſin in his people."

Thirdly, Add to this, the view in which the people of God are to be conſidered, and are conſidered by Father, Son, and Spirit, being clothed with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and waſhed in his blood: They are compleat in Chriſt; they are without fault before the throne, *without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*: Chriſt ſays to them, *Thou art all fair, my love; and there is no ſpot in thee* (z). The church is a perfection of beauty in his eſteem; all the ſaints are perfectly comely, through

(z) Cant. iv. 7.

through the comelineſs he has put upon them; yea, they are, in the ſight of God, in the eye of juſtice, unblameable and unreproveable; and if ſo, then ſurely God ſees no iniquity in them. One muſt tranſcribe a conſiderable part both of the Old and New Teſtament to give the full proof of this doctrine.

If this is a fancy, it is the glory of the Bible, and the marrow of the goſpel; what moſt diſplays the riches of God's grace, the efficacy of Chriſt's blood, the compleatneſs of his righteouſneſs, and the fulneſs of his ſatisfaction; it is the foundation of all ſolid hopes of future happineſs, what ſupports the life of faith, and is the ground of a believer's triumph. One would have thought, Sir, you might have forbore ſo ſevere a reflection on this truth, of God's ſeeing no ſin in his people, ſince it is the נביט, the expreſs words of the ſacred oracles: *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he ſeen perverſeneſs in Iſrael* (*a*). I proceed,

IV. To another truth decried by you as a fancy; the aſſerters of which are ridiculed, as amuſers of themſelves with a fancy, which is, that "good works are not neceſſary to ſalvation." I am ſenſible, in ſome meaſure, what controverſies have been in the world about this ſubject, and what extremes have been run into on both ſides the queſtion. There was a ſharp contention among the *Lutherans* on this head. *George Major* aſſerted, that "good works

(*a*) Numb. xxiii. 21.

were neceſſary to ſalvation; on the other hand, *Nicholaus Amſdorfius* ſaid, that they were "noxious and pernicious to ſalvation:" neither of theſe poſitions are defenſible, as they thus ſtand: Not the former; for though good works are neceſſary, upon many accounts, to anſwer ſeveral valuable ends and purpoſes, yet not neceſſary to ſalvation; though they ought to be performed by all God's juſtified and ſaved ones, yet not in order to their juſtification and ſalvation; though the people of God ought to maintain good works for *neceſſary uſes*, yet theſe neceſſary uſes do not deſign ſalvation, but other things, as I ſhall ſhew preſently. Nor is the latter of theſe poſitions to be defended; for though good works are not *neceſſary* to ſalvation, yet not *noxious* and pernicious to it, unleſs when they are placed in the buſineſs of ſalvation, to the diſplacing of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and then they are ſo far from helping forward, that they hinder the ſalvation of ſouls, being an *ignis fatuus*, which lead out of the way of ſalvation. The Papiſts and Proteſtants have warmly conteſted this point: The former ſay, that good works are neceſſary to ſalvation, *per viam efficientia*, "by way of efficiency or cauſality," to merit or procure ſalvation; which is the only ſenſe in which the propoſition can well be underſtood; for if good works are neceſſary to ſalvation, it muſt be to procure it; for in what ſenſe elſe can they be neceſſary to it? This is denied by the latter, and by them fully confuted; though ſome have made uſe of ſome diſtinctions, in order

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to qualify and ſoften this propoſition, that good works are *neceſſary* to ſalvation, by which they have betrayed the truth into the hands of the enemy. I ſhall attempt to ſhew,

Firſt, That good works are in no ſenſe neceſſary to ſalvation.

Secondly, What they are neceſſary to, or what are the neceſſary uſes of them.

Firſt, I affirm that good works are *not* neceſſary to ſalvation in any ſenſe.

1*ſt*, They are not neceſſary to ſalvation by way of cauſality, as having any cauſal influence on our ſalvation, or any part of it. Chriſt is the ſole author of ſalvation; he came into this world to effect it; he has done it, it is finiſhed, it is compleat and perfect in itſelf; it needs nothing to be added to it to make it ſo: Chriſt is a rock, and his work is perfect; he is a Saviour in whole, and not in part; he will admit of no copartner or aſſiſtant in this matter. Good works have no concern, as cauſes, in our ſalvation; God, in ſaving perſons, does not act according to them, nor by them, nor in conſideration of them; for (*b*) *he hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began.* And, ſays the ſame inſpired writer elſewhere (*c*); *not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but, according to his mercy, he ſaved us, by the waſh-*

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(*b*) 2 Tim. i. 9. (*c*) Titus iii. 5.

ing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt. God ſaves his elect by Chriſt in a way of pure grace and mercy, to the excluſion of good works having any hand therein; *For by grace ye are ſaved*, ſays the apoſtle (*d*), *through faith*; *and that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God*; *not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.* Good works are not to be placed in any rank of *cauſes* of our ſalvation whatever.

1. They are not the impulſive, or moving cauſes of ſalvation. Nothing out of God can move him to do any thing; good works did not move him to take any one ſtep relating to the ſalvation of his people; they did not move him to chooſe them unto ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; he choſe them in Chriſt, before the foundation of the world, before they had done either good or evil; and ſo not becauſe they *were*, but that they *might* be holy. This act of his ſprung from his good will and pleaſure, and is an inſtance of pure grace. Hence it is called (*e*) *the election of grace*; *and*, adds the apoſtle, *if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace*; *but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.* Good works are the *fruits*, not the *cauſes* of electing grace; nor did theſe move God to make a covenant of grace with his elect in Chriſt, in which the ſcheme of ſalvation was fixed, the whole of it ſecured, and all bleſſings and promiſes put into the hands of the

(*d*) Eph. ii. 8, 9. (*e*) Rom. xi. 5, 6.

the Mediator; nor was it good works that moved God to ſend his Son to obtain ſalvation, but his own free love and grace; nor what moved Chriſt to give himſelf for his people, ſince at that time they were *without ſtrength, ungodly, ſinners, and enemies to him*; in a word, it is not good works, but grace, which moves God to juſtify, pardon, adopt, regenerate, ſanctify, and glorify any of the ſons of men.

2. Good works are not the efficient, procuring, or meritorious cauſes of ſalvation; for they are imperfect in the beſt of men; and were they perfect, yet the requiſites of merit are wanting in them; for,

(1.) That by which we would merit, muſt not be due to him, of whom we would merit. Now all our works are previouſly due to God; he has a right to all our obedience, prior to the performance of it; and therefore *when we have done all thoſe things which are commanded us, we have done but that which was our duty to do.*

(2.) That by which we would merit, muſt be ſome way or other profitable to him, of whom we would merit: But (*f*) *can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wiſe may be profitable to himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it any gain to him, that thou makeſt thy ways perfect? If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedneſs may hurt a man, as thou*

(*f*) Job xxii. 2, 3. and xxxv. 7, 8.

art, and thy righteouſneſs may profit the Son of man.

(3.) That by which we would merit, muſt be done in our own ſtrength, and not in the ſtrength of him, of whom we would merit: We muſt not be obliged to him for any thing in the performance of it; whereas all our ſufficiency to think a good thought, or do a good action, is of God; without him we can do nothing; it is by the grace of God we are what we are; and it is by the grace of God we do what we do; and therefore to him all the glory belongs.

(4.) There muſt be ſome proportion between that by which we would merit, and that which we would merit. Now there is a juſt proportion between ſin and the wages of it, but none between good works and eternal ſalvation; *The (g) wages of ſin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

In fine, if good works were the efficient procuring cauſes of ſalvation, then Chriſt died in vain; his obedience and ſufferings muſt be uſeleſs, and of no effect; beſides, boaſting would not be *excluded*, which is God's deſign in fixing the method of ſalvation in the manner he has; for if men were ſaved by works, they would have whereof to boaſt.

3. Good works are not co-efficient cauſes or con-cauſes of ſalvation with Chriſt; they are not adjuvant

(g) Rom. vi. 23.

adjuvant or helping cauſes of it; they do not aſſiſt in, or help forward the buſineſs of ſalvation; it is done without them: Chriſt will not admit of any rivalſhip in this matter; his own arm has brought ſalvation to him; he has alone effected it, and is the ſole author of it; and therefore good works are needleſs in this reſpect. It is a rule in philoſophy, *Quod poteſt fieri per pauca, non debet fieri per plura*; "what can be done by few, ought not to "be done by more." There is a fulneſs, a ſufficiency in Chriſt to ſalvation, therefore good works are not neceſſary to ſalvation.

4. Good works are not *cauſa ſine qua non*, of ſalvation; they are not conditions of ſalvation, or what without which perſons cannot be ſaved; as is evident from the inſtances of the thief upon the croſs, of elect infants dying in infancy, and of multitudes of others, as it is to be hoped, whom God calls in the laſt hour, upon their death-beds, who live not to perform good works. Now if good works are neceſſary to ſalvation, and perſons cannot be ſaved without them, then none of thoſe perſons mentioned can be ſaved.

2*dly*, There are ſome worthy divines who utterly deny the efficiency or cauſality of good works in ſalvation, who yet think that this propoſition, that "good works are neceſſary to ſalvation," may ſtand ſafely, and in a good ſenſe, admitting ſome diſtinctions, which I ſhall briefly take notice of, and are as follow:

Some ſay, that though good works are not neceſſary to ſalvation, as cauſes, yet they are neceſſary, as means. This cannot be true, becauſe every mean is the cauſe of that unto which it is a mean; and then good works muſt be the cauſes of ſalvation, which has been diſproved already. If good works are the means of ſalvation, they muſt be either the means of procuring it, or of applying it, or of introducing God's people into the full poſſeſſion of it: They are not the means of procuring ſalvation, for that is procured by Chriſt alone without them; nor are they the means of applying it in regeneration or effectual vocation; becauſe, properly ſpeaking, before regeneration, or effectual vocation, there are no good works done by the ſons of men: They muſt be firſt regenerated, and called by grace; there muſt be an application of ſalvation; the goſpel muſt become the power of God unto ſalvation, before they are capable of performing good works: *We are his workmanſhip*, ſays the apoſtle (*b*), *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them.* Nor are they the means of introducing God's people into the full poſſeſſion of ſalvation; for *they that die in the Lord, reſt from their labours, and their works follow them.* They do not go beforehand to prepare the way for them, or to introduce them into the heavenly glory. Good works are not neceſſary, as means, either for the application

(*b*) Eph. ii.

application or poſſeſſion of ſalvation, neither for the inchoation or conſummation of it.

Others make uſe of a diſtinction, which is *Bernard*'s; which is, that though good works are not *cauſa regnandi*, "the cauſe of reigning," yet they are *via ad regnum*, "the way to the kingdom." But it ought to be obſerved, that *Bernard* does not ſay that they are *via ad regnum*, but *via regni*, "the way of the kingdom;" between which there is a great difference; for good works may be the way or courſe *of* ſuch, who are of the kingdom of grace, and belong to the kingdom of glory, when they are not the way *to* either. *Chriſt is the way, the truth, and the life*; the only true way to eternal life. Good works are to be performed by all that are in the way, Chriſt: They are the buſineſs of all ſuch that walk in this way, but they themſelves are *not* the way, unleſs it can be thought that good works *are* Chriſt.

Others ſay, that good works are neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation; not *quoad efficientiam*, "as to the efficiency of them," but *quoad preſentiam*, "as to the preſence of them;" and that though they have no cauſal influence on ſalvation, yet the preſence of them is neceſſary to ſalvation. That the preſence of good works is neceſſary to all thoſe who are juſtified and ſaved, that are capable of performing them, and have time and opportunity to perform them, I allow; but that it is neceſſary to their juſtification and ſalvation, I deny; for if it is neceſſary, it muſt be neceſſary either as a cauſe,

cauſe, or a condition, or a mean of juſtification and ſalvation, either of which has been diſproved already.

Others ſay, that they are a neceſſary antecedent to ſalvation, and that they are neceſſary to it, as the antecedent to the conſequent: but, from the inſtances before mentioned, of the thief on the croſs, of elect infants dying in infancy, with thoſe whom God calls by his grace on their death-beds, it appears that ſalvation is where good works do not go before. It is true, indeed, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord* (*i*); that is, without internal holineſs, without a principle of holineſs in the heart. This muſt be ſuppoſed to be in the perſons inſtanced in; but then there may be this, where there is no external holineſs, or any performance of good works before men; and that either through incapacity, or through want of time and opportunity. And now, leſt it ſhould be thought that I imagine that the performance of good works are unneceſſary, I ſhall proceed,

Secondly, To ſhew in what ſenſe they *are* neceſſary, and what are the neceſſary uſes of them; for to ſay, that becauſe they are not neceſſary to ſalvation, that therefore they are unneceſſary to any thing elſe, is very illogical; though the ſcriptures no where ſay that they are neceſſary to ſalvation, yet they direct us to *learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes* (*k*); which are theſe following.

1. They

(*i*) Heb. xii. 14. (*k*) Titus iii. 14.

1. They are neceſſary on the account of God, who has commanded them: We are under his law as creatures, and ought to do his will and pleaſure; and as new creatures are under greater obligation ſtill; we ought to perform good works in reſpect to the commands of God, to teſtify our obedience and ſubjection to him, and to ſhew the grateful ſenſe we have of his mercies, both ſpiritual and temporal, as well as to anſwer ſome ends of his glory: *Herein*, ſays Chriſt (*l*), *is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* Nay, we not only glorify God ourſelves by our good works, but are the means of others glorifying him likewiſe: Hence, ſays our Lord (*m*), *let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.*

2. Good works are neceſſary on the account of ourſelves. They are uſeful to evidence the truth of our faith to the world, and diſcover to them the certainty of our election and vocation, who have no other way of judging of either, but by our outward converſation: Hereby we adorn the profeſſion we make of Chriſt and his goſpel; ſo that his name, his ways, truths, and ordinances, are not blaſphemed, or ſpoken evil of through us; yea, hereby we exerciſe a conſcience void of offence, both towards God and man.

3. Good

(*l*) John xv. 8. (*m*) Matt. v. 16.

3. Good works are neceſſary on the account of our neighbours, who, as they are often injured by evil works, are helped and profited by good works. One part of the moral law is, to love our neighbour as ourſelves: Now as a turning from this holy commandment tends to our neighbour's injury, ſo a conformity to it iſſues in his good.

4. Good works are neceſſary on the account of the enemies of religion. A good converſation recommends the goſpel, and the truths of it, and may be a means of winning perſons over to it; and if not, yet it ſilences the ignorance of fooliſh men, and ſhames ſuch, and ſtops the mouths of thoſe who reproach the goſpel of Chriſt, as a licentious doctrine, and falſly accuſe the good converſation of the ſaints. From the whole, I hope, it appears, on the one hand, that good works are neceſſary, and not trifling and indifferent things, that may, or may not, be done; or that they are uſeleſs, unneceſſary, and inſignificant; and, on the other hand, that it is no fancy, but matter of faith, and what ought to be abode by, that good works are *not* neceſſary to ſalvation.

V. I obſerve that you deſcribe ſuch as aſſert that God loves and delights in his elect, while in a ſtate of nature; that he ſees no ſin in his people, and that good works are not neceſſary to ſalvation, as perſons "forward to condemn preſſing men to duty, "as legal preaching; and to ſpeak of exhorting to "repentance, mortification, and ſelf denial, as low and

" and mean ſtuff." The ſame complaint you make in another place (*n*).

1*ſt*, I cannot but wonder that you ſhould eſteem ſuch culpable or blame-worthy, who condemn preſſing men to duty, as legal preaching; for preſſing men to duty, can be no other than legal preaching, or preaching of the law; ſince duty can be referred to nothing elſe but to the law, which obliges to it. Should they condemn preſſing men to duty, as criminal, or deny that there ought to be any preaching, or that there is any uſe of the law, you might juſtly have blamed them. The duties which the law requires, ought to be in their place inſiſted on in the miniſtry of the word; they ſhould be opened and explained; men ſhould be taught their duty to God and one another; they ſhould be preſſed, that is, if I underſtand it, be *exhorted* unto it, with goſpel-motives and arguments, ſuch as the apoſtles frequently make uſe of in their epiſtles. They ſhould, at the ſame time, be told where grace and ſtrength lie, and are to be had to aſſiſt them in it. The preaching of the law is of uſe both to ſaints and ſinners; it is made uſeful by the Spirit of God to convince of ſin; *By the law is the knowledge of ſin* (*o*); though by it is no knowledge of a Saviour from ſin; it ſhews the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, the deformity of nature, the imperfection of man's obedience,

(*n*) Sermon of the Cauſes of the Decay of Practical Religion, p. 584. in Vol. II. of the Defence of ſome important Doctrines of the Goſpel.

(*o*) Rom. iii. 20.

obedience, and what is requiſite to his juſtification before God; though it leaves him ignorant of that righteouſneſs which can only anſwer its demands, and render him acceptable in the ſight of God. The law is a rule of walk and converſation to believers, as it is in the hands of Chriſt, and given out by him, as King of his church; it contains the perfect and acceptable will of God; it points out what is, or what is not to be done; it is in its own nature ſpiritual, juſt and good, and very agreeable to the regenerate man, *who delights in the law of God, after the inward man.* But then *preſſing* men to duty, is preaching the law, and that muſt needs be *legal* preaching, though it ought not to be branded with any odious or invidious character; for all duty belongs to a law; grace, and promiſes of grace, belong to the goſpel, but precepts and duty to the law. We have had a controverſy among us lately about *preaching Chriſt*, in the latitude and reſtrictive way; and, no doubt, the people have been much edified and inſtructed by it; but men may controvert to the end of the world, it can never be proved, that preaching good works is preaching Chriſt, or that preſſing men to *duty*, is preaching the *goſpel*; unleſs it can be thought that good works are Chriſt, and that the law is goſpel. I am entirely for calling things by their right names; preaching duty, is preaching the law; preaching the free grace of God, and ſalvation by Chriſt, is preaching the goſpel; to ſay otherwiſe, is to turn the goſpel into a law, and to blend and confound both together.

Some

Some very worthy divines, whoſe names I forbear to mention, did formerly talk of goſpel-commands, goſpel-threatnings, and goſpel-duties, which, to me, are contradictions in terms; and I fear that this looſe and unguarded way of talking, tended to pave the way for *Neonomianiſm* among us, which, ſome few years ago, gave the churches ſo much diſturbance, and the bad effects of which we ſtill feel.

2*dly*, "Exhorting to repentance, you ſay, is "ſpoken of by theſe perſons, as low and mean "ſtuff;" but you do not tell us what kind of repentance is meant, or with what views, or upon what conſiderations an exhortation to it is given. There is an evangelical and a legal repentance: *Evangelical repentance* has God for its object, and is called *repentance towards God* (*p*). It is the gift of Chriſt, who *is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins* (*q*); and is one of the graces of the Spirit of God, which he implants in the hearts of his people. It is that ſorrow and concern for ſin, which ſprings from, and is heightened and increaſed by the diſcoveries of God's love; it is accompanied with views, or, at leaſt, hopes of pardoning grace and mercy; it is a godly ſorrow (*r*), η κατα Θεον λυπη, "a ſorrow according to God," agreeable to the mind and will of God; a divine ſorrow, which ſprings from divine principles, and proceeds on divine views; or it is a ſorrow for ſin, as it is committed againſt a God of holineſs, purity, grace, and mercy; *which*

(*p*) Acts xx. 21.
(*q*) Ibid. chap. v. 31.
(*r*) 2 Cor. vii. 10.

which godly ſorrow worketh repentance unto ſalvation, not to be repented of; and therefore by no means to be ſpoken ſlightly of. Nor can exhortations to ſuch a kind of repentance, be treated as low and mean ſtuff, without caſting contempt on *John* the Baptiſt (*s*), Chriſt, and his apoſtles; who made uſe of them, either to ſhew the neceſſity of repentance, or to encourage the exerciſe of this grace in the ſaints, or to ſtir them up to an open profeſſion of it, and to bring forth fruits in their converſation meet for the ſame. *Legal repentance* is a work of the law, and conſiſts in outward confeſſion of ſin, and external humiliation for it, and in inward horror, wrath, and terror, upon the account of it. It is a ſorrow and concern for ſin, not becauſe of the evil that is in ſin, but becauſe of the puniſhment that is like to come by it. It is a concern for ſin, not as it is in its own nature exceeding ſinful, or as it is an offence to God, and a breach of his law, but as it entails upon the ſinner ruin and deſtruction: This is *the ſorrow of the world, which worketh death*; and may be where true evangelical repentance never was, nor never will be, and therefore is not to be valued and regarded. Now to exhort to this kind of repentance, or even to evangelical repentance, as within the compaſs of the power of man's will, and as a condition of the covenant of grace, and a term of acceptance with God, and in order to make peace with God, and gain the divine favour, which you know is the rant

(*s*) Mat. iii. 2. and iv. 17. Acts ii. 38. and iii. 19. Rev. ii. 5, 16. and iii. 3, 19.

rant of ſome mens miniſtry; I ſay, to exhort to repentance with ſuch views, and on ſuch conſiderations as theſe, is low and mean ſtuff, too mean for, below, and unworthy of a miniſter of the goſpel.

3dly, You mention exhorting to *mortification* and ſelf-denial, as treated by ſome, in the ſame ſlight and contemptuous manner. You know very well that much of what has been ſaid and written concerning mortification, is low, mean, and trifling, and it would be mortification enough to be obliged to hear and read it. I confeſs, I have often been at a loſs what divines mean by mortification of ſin; if they mean a deſtroying the being of ſin, a killing, a taking away the life of it in believers, which ſeems to be their meaning; this is contrary both to ſcripture and all the experience of God's people. The word of God aſſures us, that ſin is in believers, and they find it to be in them; yea, to be *alive* in them, though they do not live *in* ſin. The old man, is, indeed, *put off*, concerning the former converſation, but not put to death; he remains and is alive, and is ſometimes very active, though he lies in chains, and is under the power and dominion of mighty and efficacious grace. There is a mortification of ſin by the death of Chriſt; *The old man is crucified with Chriſt, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed* (*t*). Chriſt has aboliſhed, deſtroyed, made an end of ſin; through Chriſt's bearing the ſins of his people in his own body on the tree, and through his death

 they

(*t*) Rom. vi. 6.

they *are dead to ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs*. But ſin is not dead in them; there is no ſuch thing as a mortification, a killing or deſtroying the inward principles of ſin in believers, nor is it to be expected in this life. If, indeed, by mortification of ſin, is meant a weakening the power of ſin, ſo as that it ſhall not have the dominion over the ſaints; this is readily granted to be found in them: but then it will be difficult to prove that ever this is called *mortification* in ſcripture. The mortification the ſcripture ſpeaks of, and exhorts to, does not deſign the mortification of the inward principles of ſin, but the outward actings of it; it is a mortification of an external courſe of living in ſin, and not a taking away the life of ſin in the ſoul, as is evident from thoſe places where any mention is made of it; *mortify therefore*, ſays the apoſtle (*u*), *your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry; in which ye alſo walked ſome time when ye lived in them*; which laſt words ſhew, that the apoſtle has reſpect to a walk, a converſation, a courſe of living in theſe ſins; ſo when he ſays (*w*), *they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts*; he means the works of the fleſh, and the actings of unruly paſſions and deceitful luſts, as appears from the context; and when exhortations to mortification of ſin, in this ſenſe, are given, a ſpecial regard ſhould be had to the gracious influences of the bleſſed Spirit; for, as the apoſtle ſays,

(*u*) Col. iii. 5, 7. (*w*) Gal. v. 24.

ſays (*x*), *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.*

As for *ſelf-denial*, perhaps no perſons are found more in the practice of it, than thoſe you have deſcribed, however averſe they may be to exhortations to it, made without taking any notice of the grace and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God, as neceſſary to the exerciſe of it. They chooſe to ſuffer reproach, the loſs of good name and reputation, to forego popularity, wealth, and friends, to be traduced as *Antinomians*, and reckoned any thing, rather than to drop, conceal, or balk any one branch of truth, reſpecting Chriſt and free grace. None are more ready to deny ſelf-righteouſneſs than they are, and to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, on which they alone depend for juſtification before God, and acceptance with him; nor are any perſons more powerfully and effectually taught *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world.* And you, Sir, are ſo kind as to ſay, that ſuch who have amuſed themſelves with what you call *fancies*, "by their life and "converſation have ſhewed, that they were far "from being enemies to holineſs." And you further add, "Far be it from us to charge ſome, who "have gone into this way of thinking and talking, "with turning the grace of God into wantonneſs."

I conclude, Sir, with aſſuring you, that I write not this with an angry and contentious ſpirit; I am willing to ſubmit theſe things to the ſcriptures of truth, which are the only rule of faith and practice; and

(*x*) Rom. viii. 13.

and would gladly enter into a ſober controverſy, and try whether they be mere fancies, or parts of that faith, which was once delivered to the ſaints. If, Sir, you ſhould think fit to give me an anſwer to this letter, I deſire you would not ſo much attend to my inaccuracies in writing, which I know, you are able to correct, as to the truths themſelves herein aſſerted and defended. I wiſh you ſucceſs in your learned ſtudies.

I am, SIR,

With all due Reſpect,

Yours, &c.

4 AU 64.